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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Have you encountered any problems entering or exiting the CNMI since federal authorities took over immigration functions at the airport?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
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to cast your vote.

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Overhaul
Democrats put the final touches to historic legislation enshrining health care as the right of every citizen.

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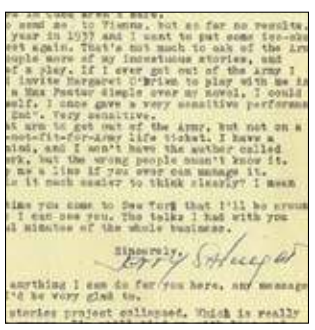

Letter Exhibit
The JFK Library in Boston will showcase J.D. Salinger's letter to Hemingway.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

I have found that the time has come to legalize the use and possession of marijuana for all purposes and to remove any and all associated penalties.

—Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan)

Torres wants pot legalized in NMI

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) wants marijuana use and possession legalized in the CNMI for health and safety reasons.

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Health care 'fix-it' bill passes, with major benefits for CNMI

» Medicaid funding triples to $158 million over nine years
» Access to subsidized insurance at option of governor

Sablan

Over a year of intense effort to include the Northern Mariana Islands and other U.S. territories in the benefits of health care reform legislation finally paid off yesterday for U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) and the

See HEALTH on Page 4

Kilili asks Obama for at least $25.5M in new earmarks

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has asked President Barack Obama for over $25.5 million in Fiscal Year 2011 directed appropriation requests or "earmarks" involving at least

See KILILI on Page 4

A COLLAGE OF CULTURES HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Top, Hopwood Junior High School's newly crowned Miss Hilitai, Antonette Villagomez, second from right, front row, poses with other pageant contestants, judges and school principal Jonas Barcinas, back row, during yesterday's Annual Cultural Day Festivity with the theme, "A Collage of Cultures." Other photo shows the Mr. Hilitai pageant contestants.

See story on Page 2 and photos on Page 17.

PIC celebrates its 15,000th Russian guest. PAGE 2
AG admits Aldan asked for review of husband's case. **PAGE 3**

Local

Hopwood celebrates 'Collage of Cultures'

Mr. & Miss Hilitai, local games, food sampling highlight festivities

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Over a thousand students, spectators, and parents joined Hopwood Junior High School in celebrating the diversity of its campus yesterday.

This year's theme, "A Collage of Culture," was chosen among the several entries in the school's poster-making contest.

The colorful parade of costumes representing various nationalities kicked off the festivity at 9am, with groups proudly showing off the traditional attire of Chamorros, Carolinians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, and other ethnicities.

The festival ground was decorated with creative traditional décor, while different student groups and academic organizations occupied several booths, most of which sold healthy foods for fundraising.

Among the crowd drawers was the "Jail House" built by the student council, where a "prisoner" must pay a $1 bail to regain his or her liberty.

Traditional performances also wowed the crowd in the gathering that lasted until 3pm yesterday.

According to Hopwood principal Jonas Barcinas, the event is among the biggest activities on campus every year.

» See photos on Page 17

He lauded in particular the "cultural food sampling" section, where popular dishes from different countries were offered to students and spectators. Among these were Japanese and Korean cuisine, local food, popular dishes from the Philippines, and food samples from India, China, and Bangladesh.

While others watched traditional performances on stage, other students were cheering for their bets in local games: coconut dribbling race, waddle race, husking, and grinding.

Barcinas also initiated this year the school's first annual Mr. and Miss Hilitai Pageant contest.

Eighth grader Antonette K. Villagomez, 15, was crowned Miss Halitai, besting 14 other candidates for the title. She was hailed the teen ambassador for the school after demonstrating good character as a student role model.

Eighth grader Matthew Lopez was chosen as this year's Mr. Hilitai.

Runner-up winners in the Mr. & Miss Hilitai contest included Vanisha Pangelinan, Shivon Sablan, Jessie Mae Seman, Susie Tighe, Aiko Erungel, and Betran Palacios and Edward Bai.

All winners and runner-ups were awarded gift certificates.

Barcinas lauded the commitment and hard work of the festival committee and sponsors for making the event a huge success for Hopwood. He vowed an even more exciting celebration in 2011.

Barcinas believes the event provides an opportunity for students to get together and enjoy each other's company regardless of their nationality and interests.

Yesterday's celebration is in line with the school's Chamorro Carolinian Heritage Language Studies.

Among the event's performers were Pacific Flowers, Saipan Awaodori Team, Tekanahao-Nui, MHS Chamorro Club, Refaluwasch Warriors, Inatuas, Crime Stoppers, My Wave, Korean G5, and others.

PIC celebrates its 15,000th Russian guest

This Friday, the Pacific Islands Club Saipan welcomed its 15,000th Russian guest after 14 years of catering to this emerging market. Denis and Natalia Valyus, their 4-year-old daughter Ekaterina, and grandmother Anna are the lucky celebrants.

PIC has kept the celebration a secret from the guests, so the Valyus family was pleasantly surprised upon arrival on Saipan early Friday morning when Elly Stoilova, PIC's Russian market manager, personally greeted them to share the wonderful news. From the airport, the family was transferred to PIC on SkyCastle's stretch Hummer limousine, which was generously donated.

This is the first trip to the Mariana Islands for the Valyus. Friends had recommended that they spend the school spring break on Saipan. The family said they were happy they listened to the advice.

The Valyus family arrived from the Russian Far East city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk through the Russian travel agency on Saipan, Belka Tours. They will spend 15 days on Saipan.

PIC has prepared a variety of gifts and surprises for the family, including complimentary room nights at PIC, discounts, breakfast with champagne, a special event at the Seaside Grill and a tree-planting commemorative ceremony prior to their sunset dinner. MVA printed a welcoming banner that was visible in the hotel lobby to greet the family, as well as shell leis for each family member and a Saipanda backpack for the little Ekaterina.

Local tour operators and companies also supported PIC in this special event. The First Floral Shop helped the hotel decorate the guest room with flowers and balloons. In addition, the Valyus family is invited to enjoy a SandCastle cocktail show, a "Stars & Stripes" sunset dinner cruise and dinner at Tony Roma's and Truong. Giovanni's at the Hyatt invited the family for Sunday Brunch. Restaurant 360 has prepared a very special treat for the lucky family and will serve a "Feeling like a Star" dinner with exclusive menu and limousine service from the hotel to the restaurant.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Valyus family—Denis and Natalia, their 4-year-old daughter Ekaterina, and grandmother Anna—are fetched at the Saipan International Airport with SkyCastle's stretch Hummer limousine, a complimentary service honoring the family as the 15,000th Russian guest of the Pacific Islands Club.

Hertz Rent-a-Car donated a Ford Mustang Convertible for two days while Toyota Rent-a-Car offered a Toyota RAV4 SUV for another two days so the family can view the island's scenic spots on four separate days. Thanks to Pacific Subsea, the Valyus will explore the underwater world of Saipan's rich azure lagoon in its yellow submarine, the *Deepstar*. Natalia and her mother, Anna, will be pampered at the Mandi Asia Spa and the Thai Spa at PIC.

The gifts don't end here. DFS has also prepared a shopping voucher for $100 for the lucky family and King's Jewelry store delivered a special pearl gift to the guests' room to welcome them.

The 15,000th Russian guest celebration commemorates PIC's 14 years of continuous and excellent service to the Russian market. Since 1996, PIC has devoted its resources in developing this growing tourism market. For the last eight years, PIC has worked to improve its Russian language Web site with current events and promotions. It also contains thorough information of the CNMI and answers questions for the curious traveler.

In 2005, PIC partnered with MVA to create the first Russian Saipan map and the Russian CNMI Guidebook, which is continuously updated and reprinted annually. Pacific Islands Club is proud to be the first hotel to translate into Russian all in-house information and collateral nine years ago as well as enhance services for the Russian traveler by adding a DVD and book library. Today, PIC accommodates the needs of the growing Russian visitors with seven Russian staff. ***(PIC)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Valyus family enjoys the amenities inside SkyCastle's stretch Hummer limousine.

Navy, Air Force sets training on FDM, Warning Area-517

Santa Rita, Guam—The U.S. Navy and Air Force will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates:

- March 29 from 7:45 a.m.-11:30 p.m.
- March 30 from 6 a.m.-11:30 p.m.
- March 31-April 1 from 6 a.m.-11 p.m.
- April 2 from 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

The Navy will conduct training at Warning Area-517 on the following dates:

- March 29-30 from 9:15 a.m.-1 p.m.

The general public, especially fisherman, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from these areas during the times and dates indicated.

W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. W-517 supports surface and aerial gunnery, missiles, and laser exercises. This will affect fishing in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(USN)***

3 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environment Quality has raised the red flag on three Saipan beaches—Marine Beach, Ladder Beach, and Unai Dangkulo—and advises the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

Samples collected from these locations were found to contain excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards, DEQ said.

These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria and may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

DEQ analyzed water samples collected from 12 of Saipan's east and south recreational beaches this week.

For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

AG admits Aldan asked for review of husband's case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham admitted yesterday that Dolores M. Aldan asked him on behalf of her convicted husband to review his case, but Buckingham stressed that no special treatment or consideration was made in the case.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Buckingham agreed that the Office of the Attorney General reviewed the case of Vicente T. Aldan at the request of his wife, Dolores Aldan, who is Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's special assistant for political affairs.

Buckingham said there could be a problem if he or Chief Prosecutor Rosemond Santos gave Dolores Aldan or her husband special treatment or consideration.

"I gave the chief prosecutor specific instructions that Dolores Aldan or her husband were not to be given special favorable treatment—and that they not be given special non-favorable treatment. In other words, treat this as a regular request for review," Buckingham said.

He said Dolores Aldan called him on March 16 and that on the same day, he sent an e-mail to Chief Prosecutor Santos requesting a case review.

'No special treatment or consideration made'

"Subsequent to this being sent, both the chief prosecutor and I decided that the motion should be withdrawn," Buckingham said.

Dolores Aldan was the commissioner of the Department of Corrections before being transferred to the Office of the Governor as Fitial's special assistant for political affairs.

Vicente Aldan's case used to be handled by assistant attorney general George Hasselback, who has resigned. His last working day with the OAG's Criminal Division is April 5, 2010.

Last Tuesday, Hasselback asked Superior Court associate judge David Wiseman—reportedly at the instruction of Santos—to withdraw his earlier motion to set aside the plea agreement in the case against Vicente Aldan.

Vicente Aldan was charged with assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and illegal possession of a firearm, over the beating of his former wife on July 2, 2009 on Tinian.

The defendant signed a plea agreement with the government, pleading guilty to assault. In exchange, the government dismissed the remaining charges.

Wiseman ordered the defendant to spend six months in jail without the possibility of parole. The judge imposed many conditions, including the surrender of the firearm used in the commission of the crimes.

Hasselback later found out that Vicente Aldan failed to surrender the gun, prompting him to ask the court to revoke the plea agreement and allow the government to re-file the charging information in the case.

Buckingham said yesterday that Hasselback's filing of the motion to set aside the plea agreement was a mistake.

"When a defendant and their attorney accept a plea agreement, the defendant receives punishment which may include going into custody. What the defendant gets out of the deal is the Commonwealth agreement to drop all other charges in a case," he said.

He said it is his view that it is very inappropriate to have a defendant serve a substantial part of his sentence and then, while the sentence is still being served, to have the government reopen the case.

Attao is elected new GOP president

MONETH G. DEPOSA

The newly elected officers of the CNMI Republican Party. From left are second vice president Donald Barcinas, president Dave Attao, first vice president Emi Palican, and treasurer Ramon Salas.

Deadline set for delegate wannabes

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Members of the local Republican Party named Dave Attao as their new president during an election held at the Garapan Central Park Thursday night.

Attao replaces Ed Tenorio, who took a long leave of absence last year.

Former governor Juan N. Babauta nominated Attao to the post, noting his valuable contribution to the party in the election last year. *Saipan Tribune* learned that Attao served as the group's acting leader during the long absence of their former president.

Emi Palican was also named the group's first vice president in tandem with newly elected second vice president Donald Barcinas.

Ramon Salas and Alisa Pangelinan were also chosen as the GOP's new treasurer and secretary respectively.

Representing the local party to the Republican National Council is Bo Palacios.

Since last week, the GOP has received only one letter of intent for the delegate position.

Former governor Juan N. Babauta, Attao said, has a good chance to get the party's endorsement if no one else steps forward to seek the party's support.

However, to give a fair chance to all members interested in running for the position, the new GOP leadership set April 16 as the deadline for the submission of letters of intent.

In the last delegate election, the party set a $10,000 fee as a requirement for those intending to run for the post. Attao said the officers will meet anew to discuss the possibility of reducing the amount for potential candidates.

Attao eyes the party's reorganization as his first priority.

"Our priority is to reorganize the party and make sure that our candidate has good positioning in the delegate seat," Attao told *Saipan Tribune*.

In case Babauta gets the GOP's endorsement, Attao is confident that the former governor will give a good fight in the November election. "I think the former governor has a good chance. Personally, it will be between Kilili and Babauta," he said.

He admitted that the party is a little behind in its endorsement of a candidate but Attao believes that whoever is supported by the party will have a good chance of winning.

Three individuals have so far signified their interest to run for the post: Babauta, Covenant Party bet Joseph Camacho, and incumbent Gregorio Kilili Sablan.

As for some GOP members jumping ship last year, Attao said certain regulations need to be strengthened.

"The party has its own set of bylaws [and] some of these are outdated policies. These have been hurting us…and we're going to strengthen that," he said, adding that the party respects the decision of former colleagues.

Attao believes that the key to a successful party is the "loyalty" of members.

"Loyalty is key…and that's what the party lost itself last time. But with the young generation and new group, we can build loyalty…[and] I guarantee that GOP will win future elections," he said.

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Northern Mariana Islands
RETIREMENT FUND

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC, Division 9, §9910, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees/Workers' Compensation Commission/Group Health & Life Insurance Trust Fund, are hereby giving notice that the Board of Trustees will hold its Regular meeting Wednesday, March 31, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. at the NMI Retirement Fund Conference Room, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of Minutes of Meetings
  - 1. October 15, 2009
  - 2. February 22-24, 2010

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. REPORTS
- A. Report of the Chairman
  - 1. ROC No. 10-006
- B. Report of the Administrator / Correspondence
  - 1. ROA No. 10-006
    - a) Status Updates
- C. Report of the Comptroller
  - 1. Financials
    - a) NMI Retirement Fund
    - b) GHLITF
    - c) WCC
  - 2. Drawdown Requests
- D. Reports of the Committees
  - 1. Finance & Investment Committee
  - 2. Operations & Personnel Committee
  - 3. Policies, Programs & Legislative Review Committee
  - 4. GH&L and WCC Committee
- E. Report of the Investment Director
  - 1. Status of Investment
  - 2. Report of the Housing Loan Program
- F. Communications
  - 1. Internal Auditor Reports
- G. Other Matters

IV. LEGAL MATTERS
- A. Reports of the Legal Counsels
  - 1. Report of the Board Counsel
    - a) Lawsuit
      - i) Report of the Post Judgment Negotiation Panel
    - b) Other Legal Matters
  - 2. Report of the In-House Counsel
    - a) Update on Administrative Appeals
  - 3. Report of the Hearing Officer

V. OLD BUSINESS
- A. BR 08-001 Matters
  - 1. Pension Application Matters
  - 2. P.L. 15-98 / Refunds
  - 3. Disability Applicants
- B. MHL – Bank Pacific
- C. Life Insurance Update
- D. Health Insurance Update
  - 1. Domestic Partner Regulations
- E. NMIRF 09-004
- F. NMIRF 09-005
- G. Legal Counsel Position

VI. NEW BUSINESS
- A. RFP 01-002 Investment Consultant
- B. Money Managers
- C. Local Investment
- D. Fund Administrative Rules Amendment

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS
- A. Announcements
- B. Next Meeting
- C. Adjournment

/s/ SIXTO K. IGISOMAR
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Japan finalizing US base relocation proposal

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

TOKYO (AP)—Japan is still seeking to move a contentious American military base off the southern island of Okinawa and will finalize its proposal for Washington by end March, the prime minister said Friday.

Officials have considered various options but will boil them down to one proposal to resolve the dispute by May as promised, Yukio Hatoyama told a news conference.

The sprawling U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma air field has become a contentious issue between the allies.

Okinawans have long protested the heavy U.S. military presence on the island, which hosts more than half the 47,000 U.S. troops in Japan under a security pact.

Hatoyama

To lighten Okinawa's load, Tokyo and Washington in 2006 agreed to move the Futenma air field to a less crowded part of the island, and move 8,000 Marines from the island to the Pacific island of Guam.

But Hatoyama's coalition government, which came to power last September, has been reviewing the relocation site agreed by the previous conservative government, and is divided over calls for the base to move off the island altogether.

"We will have to limit our proposal to one, or our negotiations won't work," Hatoyama said Friday.

"Considering the burden on Okinawa, I would like to seek ways as much as possible to relocate (the base) outside" the island, Hatoyama said. "I'll do everything I can."

He refused to disclose details on alternative locations that were under consideration.

The commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific says Japan must act quickly to resolve differences with the United States over the relocation.

Admiral Robert Willard told lawmakers Wednesday that a plan to relocate 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam cannot go forward until Japan allows the U.S. air station to be shut down and moved to a less-populated part of Okinawa.

Willard says Japan recognizes that it needs to act urgently. The admiral says 10,000 remaining Marines on Okinawa will need the new base to do their jobs.

Earlier Friday, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada met with U.S. Ambassador John Roos to give him an update on Japan's progress on Futenma, while Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa flew to Okinawa to meet with local officials.

Okada did not give details of his talks with Roos.

Reported options being studied include a plan to temporarily transfer some of Futenma's heliport functions to nearby Camp Schwab by adding a new helipad there. The government is also considering reclaiming land for locating the base off the coast of the U.S. Navy's White Beach facility on the island's southeastern coast, or shifting the base to an island off the coast of Kyushu island.

KILILI

From Page 1

30 projects specifically for the CNMI, including $1 million for the planning and design of a Marianas Trench Marine National Monument to be built in the Commonwealth.

The CNMI also stands to benefits from at least four other earmarks to be shared with other states and territories should Obama approve these requests.

This is only the second time that congressionally requested earmarks have been requested for the CNMI. Sablan's first request got approved in December 2009, one of the benefits of having CNMI representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Obama signed into law an omnibus bill in December 2009 containing $1.35 million in special projects for the CNMI as Sablan requested. The omnibus bill that became law also delayed the minimum wage increase in the CNMI and American Samoa from May 2010 to Sept. 30, 2010 and every year thereafter.

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee set a March 22 deadline for FY 2011 requests.

Sablan's "earmark" requests include $6.2 million for a 70-million-gallon reservoir, a sediment basin, a pumping plant at the reservoir, and a transfer line. The beneficiaries of such amount will be the Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Sablan also asks Obama to approve $2.9 million for a CNMI volcano early warning system, $2.5 million for the American Memorial Park amphitheater roof, $2.3 million for the Public School System, and $2 million for the Rota gymnasium project.

Some $1.265 million is also requested for the rehabilitation of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe.

Also among Sablan's requests are $1 million each for the architectural and engineering design of a Marianas Trench Marine National Monument visitor center in the CNMI; the CNMI Judiciary's personnel, systems upgrade and training; and Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s water pipeline replacement.

Sablan said after completion of the Marine Monument visitor center's Phase 1, which is the planning and design, a funding request to begin construction of the facilities is anticipated for FY 2013.

Other requests include $500,000 each for the upgrade and renovation of the As Perdido slaughterhouse, the Tinian Center for Youth and Seniors, and the CNMI Roadway Beautification and Safety Project; $473,424 for the Legislative Bureau's generator and electrical system upgrade; $400,000 each for the Tinian Health Center's equipment and supplies and the NMI Museum collections facility; $371,050 for the Northern Marianas Trades Institute; and $370,000 for a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Reefs National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

Funding for this project would allow the federal agency to recruit personnel for the Marine Monument to be stationed in the CNMI.

Others on the list are $300,000 for the Department of Public Safety's communications equipment; $295,740 for the Community Guidance Center/ Transitional Living Center; $250,000 each for the Saipan Lagoon Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration and for health promotion through sports in the CNMI; $160,000 for the improvement of the Rota Bird Sanctuary Park; $128,300 for outreach and education program for the Mariana fruit bat; and $100,000 for the Independents Futbol Club.

Also on Sablan's wish list are $77,336 for the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities Parent Training and Resource Center; $76,000 for the Micronesian Legal Services Corp.'s immigration legal services and $66,500 for its Tinian and Rota legal services outreach; $72,000 for the Taga Cultural Association preservation project; $50,000 for the NMI Museum exhibit development; and $27,000 for the Office of the CNMI Public Defender's office equipment.

Four other projects that will benefit the CNMI should they be approved include the Close Up Fellowship, Teach for America, Center for Civic Education, and Center for Economic Education.

HEALTH

From Page 1

people he represents.

By a vote of 56-43 the U.S. Senate passed H.R. 4872, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. Just hours later the House of Representatives concurred with a vote of 220-207 in favor of passage. No Republican member of either the Senate or the House voted for the measure, which now goes to President Obama for his signature into law.

Under terms of the Reconciliation Act, the Northern Marianas will receive about $158 million for Medicaid over the next 10 years. This is almost triple current funding for the program that helps those with low incomes receive medical care.

In addition, the bill gives the governor of the Commonwealth the option to create a health insurance exchange, where people can purchase insurance. And funds are provided to help people who are too well off to qualify for Medicaid, but who cannot afford the full cost of health insurance premiums. If the governor chooses not to set up an exchange, the subsidy funds will go to Medicaid instead.

"It has been a very long and difficult road to finally reach this moment of success for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands," said Sablan.

"There have been many days over the last year when it seemed certain that Americans living in the territories would not be included in any meaningful way in health care reform.

"But we simply kept trying. Because that is what you have to do to be successful in Congress. Never give up — especially when the issue is as life and death important as providing greater access to health care."

There were many turning points during the year-long political debate. As a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Sablan worked overnight, through a 20-hour committee meeting in July, to amend the bill the committee approved with a commitment to include the territories.

Working together with other territorial representatives, he was able to get that commitment fulfilled. The bill the U.S. House passed in November included some $15 billion for the territories and the option for territorial governors to set up insurance exchanges with subsidized premiums.

But without representation in the Senate the territories fared poorly in the bill adopted there on Christmas Eve.

Still, the work went on. As the new year began, House and Senate negotiators began to blend their two different versions of health care, and the territorial representatives fought to keep the House provisions benefiting the territories in the negotiated, final bill.

Then came the January election of Republican Scott Brown to the Massachusetts Senate seat left empty by the death of Sen. Ted Kennedy. Without a 60-vote supermajority Democrats could no longer hope to pass the blended House-Senate bill.

Instead, the House passed the Senate bill on Sunday, March 21, with virtually nothing for the territories. But the House also quickly passed a "fix-it" bill that could get through the Senate with a simple 51-vote majority.

"Getting us into the fix-it bill was the final hurdle," according to Sablan. "And the turning point there was the meeting with President Obama, attended by me and Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi of Puerto Rico and nine other members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, including Senator Robert Menendez, who was a particularly powerful voice for the territories.

"The President responded by sending some of his top White House advisors to hammer out the details of including the territories. In fact, if you look at the Congressional Budget Office 'score' of the Reconciliation Act, you'll see that the territories are one of the only places where there is any increase in funding. We were very much a last minute decision."

Medicaid funding will begin to rise next year, increasing to an estimated $9 million, then jumping to about $16 million in 2012, and afterwards rising in steady increments until it reaches an annual total of $21.6 million in 2019.

The Northern Marianas received just $4.8 million for Medicaid in 2008, although the Recovery Act provided a $1.5 million boost for 2009 and 2010. ***(PR)***

TORRES

From Page 1

"Rather than engaging in a lengthy unresolved debate on the merits of restricting marijuana to just medicinal use, this [bill] intends to make marijuana legal for all the positive reasons that it provides," Torres said in a privilege speech Thursday night before formally introducing his House Bill 17-47.

By removing the legal restrictions on marijuana, Torres said the quantity and supply of marijuana would diminish the crime and violence associated with attempts to obtain it or protect it by use of force and violence.

"I have found that the time has come to legalize the use and possession of marijuana for all purposes and to remove any and all associated penalties. Accordingly, I hereby ask to delete certain substances from 6 CMC Section 2114 for purposes of legalizing marijuana and removing all attendant penalties and fines under 6 CMC section 2142," Torres said in his speech.

Torres' introduction of H.B. 17-47 comes shortly after California's Secretary of State on Wednesday certified that an effort to put on the ballot the issue of whether to legalize and regulate adult recreational use of marijuana has collected enough signatures to do so. California voters will decide the issue in November.

Advocates say California would have the most comprehensive laws on legal marijuana in the entire world if it passes, while opponents are confident they will easily defeat the measure.

"This is the first time that a bill has been introduced to legalize it," Torres told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday. "I'm hoping my colleagues would support it."

Torres also cited the medicinal uses of marijuana as another reason for introducing his bill.

"Marijuana proponents for medicinal use claim that it is a safe and effective treatment for dozens of conditions, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, severe pain, migraines, glaucoma, AIDS and epilepsy," he said.

The lawmaker said that medicinal marijuana, while legal in at least 14 states—Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington—has both its proponents and opponents.

He recognized the arguments of those opposed to the idea of legalizing marijuana for medicinal use.

"They argue that marijuana has not been FDA-approved because it is too dangerous to use, and that various FDA-approved drugs make the use of marijuana unnecessary… They say that medicinal marijuana is a front for drug legalization, and that people who claim medicinal use are actually using it for irresponsible pleasure," he said.

In 2007, the issue of legalizing marijuana in the CNMI came up when a group contacted the Office of the Attorney General. The Fitial administration at that time denied that the OAG was pushing for the legalization of marijuana but recognized that the office was in contact with people who want to hold a conference on the issue. The Department of Public Health and others in the community opposed the idea.

Plans underway for anti-substance abuse project

By WALTER J. SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

A newly created council that aims to reduce substance abuse in the Commonwealth kicked off a series of meetings yesterday to begin planning for a project that will target the islands' youth.

Representatives of 10 government and community organizations comprising the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant Advisory Council met to start the ball rolling on Project Brabu.

"Brabu translates into strong and healthy, so we felt that this slogan really sends a great message to the youth that we want to build strong and healthy kids in the community," said project manager Reyna Malone-Saures.

Last July, the Department of Public Health's Community Guidance Center was approved a five-year grant of $974,674 to be used to build a substance abuse prevention and early intervention system in the CNMI, with at least 85 percent of the money going toward community-level efforts.

The funding is expected to arrive in about six more months, according to Damaris Richardson, State Project Officer for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

"Today's meeting was more focused on the planning stages [for Project Brabu]. We also wanted to stress the importance of appointing sustainable council members that will provide a long term commitment to the community," said Richardson.

The SPF requires states and communities to assess their prevention needs based on epidemiological data, build their prevention capacity, plan for and implement effective community prevention programs, policies and practices, and evaluate efforts based on results.

A large part of the grant award involves ensuring that the program(s) and decisions are data-driven, data reporting becomes systematic and routine, and evaluation techniques and tools are used for optimum and improved services. The SPF will not be monitoring the community, but they will help to provide training, technical assistance, program funding opportunities, education and awareness, and media development.

Gov. Benigno Fitial signed the executive order to create the SPF SIG Advisory Council on March 18, 2010.

Its members include the Office of the Governor, DPH, Criminal Justice Planning Agency, an education representative, Department of Public Safety, the CNMI Youth Congress, CNMI Legislature (Senate representative), Saipan Chamber of Commerce, a faith-based organization representative, CNMI Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (Government Project Officer).

Fitial still needs to appoint the council's chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and the subcommittees.

The Community Guidance Center is the lead agency for the administration of the SIG and the implementation of the proposal.

The advisory council will be appointed to carry out the goals and objectives of the SIG proposal. These objectives include:

- Building prevention capacity and infrastructure in the CNMI;
- Prevent the initiation of and reduce substance abuse including childhood and underage drinking;
- Reduce substance abuse-related problems; and
- Evaluate all project activities.

WALTER SUTHERLAND
Members of the Brabu Advisory Council pose for a picture after their Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant kickoff meeting. Other photo shows Special Assistant for Administration Esther Fleming, left, and Damaris Richardson, Public Health adviser from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, cutting the ribbon to mark the creation of the new Brabu Advisory Council.

Removal cases now 51, with 30 newly filed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement has filed 30 new removal cases, bringing to 51 the total number of cases that have been filed with the Saipan U.S. Immigration Court since the federalization law took effect on Nov. 28.

From Tuesday until Thursday, Immigration Judge Philip L. DiMarzio heard the 51 cases, mostly Chinese nationals involved in human smuggling cases.

DiMarzio issued Thursday a removal order against two respondents—Weili Liu and Chengquan Zhao—who failed to appear in court.

Another respondent, Lei Xu, was found removable. Xu, 27 defended himself in the case.

Xu told the court he is seeking asylum because he fears that the Chinese government will persecute him when he returns home.

"You cannot apply asylum at this time," DiMarzio told him.

The judge, however, told Xu that he may qualify for withholding of removal or for relief on convention against torture. He gave Xu some documents that must submitted at the next hearing on May 20, 2010.

"If you submit the documents, you are entitled to a hearing," DiMarzio said.

If Xu fails to appear, DiMarzio said he will be removed from the CNMI.

The judge continued the hearing on the other cases to allow the respondents to hire lawyers.

At least two respondents had already departed the CNMI.

Guam's brown tree snake program gets $230K grant funding

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, Tony Babauta signed a grant in the amount of $230,000 to support the Guam Department of Agriculture's Brown Tree Snake Research and Control Program through 2010.

The funds will be used by the Department of Agriculture to maintain about 700 snake traps in order to continue its native species recovery efforts. In addition, important public relations activities such as the "Go Native/Ko'ko' for Cocos" campaign will be continued.

"The unintended introduction of the brown tree snake to Guam has had devastating impacts on native species. Since the mid-'80s, a model multi-agency effort has worked to develop control strategies, prevent damage to other vulnerable ecosystems and preserve and restore wildlife populations to Guam," said Babauta. "This is an important project and I'm glad to continue supporting it." ***(DOI)***

Hotel occupancy rate at 83 percent in Feb.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported an 83 percent occupancy rate among its 13 member hotels for February 2010, a 3-percent decrease from February 2009.

A total of 63,147 of the 76,028 available room nights were sold in February, compared to 61,450 of 77,000 available room nights sold over the same period last year. Room rates were up slightly from $93 last year to $93.63 in February 2010.

For Calendar Year 2010, occupancy is averaging 7 percent and room rates are averaging $103.58. This compares to 80 percent occupancy and $104.71 room rate over the same period last calendar year.

"Although Japan arrivals were down 13.5 percent, Korea and China markets were up due to Chinese New Year falling in February this year," said HANMI vice chair BK Park.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the Northern Mariana Islands. ***(HANMI)***

NMC offers free grant writing workshop on Tinian

The Northern Marianas College, through the Division of Community Programs and Services' University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, is offering a free, short-term two-day training course on Tinian to those who aspire to improve their grant writing skills.

The intent of the Grant Writing Workshop is to assist in preparing program staff to write grants in order to effectively obtain much-needed grants for their programs.

The workshop will be held on March 30 and 31, 2010. The Tuesday session will from 12:30pm to 4:30pm, while the Wednesday session will be from 8am to 12pm. Both sessions will be at the NMC Tinian Instructional Site - Room D

Seating is limited. All interested individuals should register before the first day of class. Certificates of competence will be awarded to registered students who complete all course requirements. Full payment is required for admission to a class. To register or to obtain more information about the course, contact the NMC Tinian Instructional Site at 433-0657/0649. ***(NMC)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The pope comes up short

Confronted by a cascade of new sexual abuse revelations, Pope Benedict XVI has issued a pastoral letter expressing "shame and remorse" for "sinful and criminal acts." Addressing Catholics in Ireland, where the hierarchy has been embarrassed by a government commission's report on widespread abuse, Benedict wrote that the bishops' response was "often inadequate" and that the crisis was aggravated by "a misplaced concern for the reputation of the church and the avoidance of scandal." Bishops, he said, should cooperate with "civil authorities in their areas of competence"—apparently a reference to law enforcement.

The pope's condemnation is completely appropriate. But just as important is what he left unsaid—and undone. He failed to say, for instance, that bishops in Ireland and elsewhere who have been found to have covered up abuse should leave their posts. It's bizarre that his letter was presented in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh by Cardinal Sean Brady, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Brady was present in 1975 when two children who had been abused by a priest were pressured to remain silent, supposedly so they wouldn't influence each other's accounts. Brady did not report the abuse to law enforcement.

Some critics link the pope's aversion to disciplining errant bishops to the fact that during his tenure as archbishop of Munich, the archdiocese allowed a priest who had molested an 11-year-old boy to return to ministry; according to church officials, the move was made without the knowledge of the future pope. More likely, but equally disturbing, is that the pope remains overly influenced by the same concern for the image of the church that he himself, in his pastoral letter, called misplaced. Ironically, attempts to avoid scandalizing the faithful have the opposite effect.

As for the sexual misconduct that so many bishops sought to hide, the pope in his letter shifted blame to psychologists who gave bishops "conflicting expert advice" about dealing with pedophiles. He also echoed the theory, popular with Catholic conservatives, that priestly abuse can be attributed to the liberalization of the church following the Second Vatican Council. Never mind that abuse reaches back into the pre-Vatican II era.

For all the pope's expressions of contrition, the church's credibility will continue to suffer until bishops complicit in the culture of denial and coverup are removed—and not just transferred to a Vatican sinecure like the one bestowed on Cardinal Bernard Law, the disgraced former archbishop of Boston. Unless more mitered heads roll, the pope's protestations of shame will ring hollow for many Catholics.

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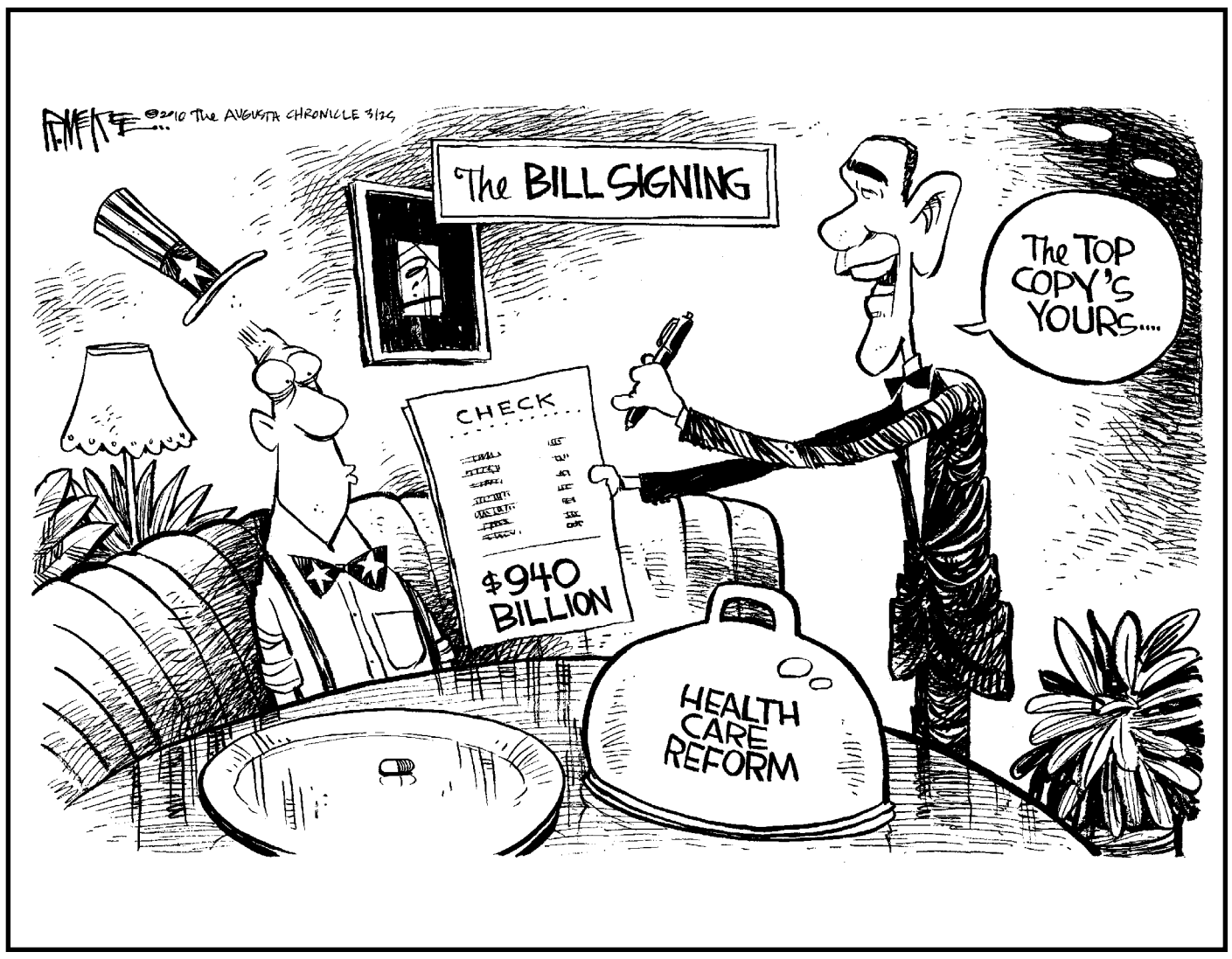

America's fickle welcome mat

By JEFFREY KAYE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

The Obama administration has set a record for deportations of illegal immigrants, much to the dismay of immigration reform advocates who had hoped the president would reverse the enforcement policies of his predecessor, George W. Bush.

In fiscal year 2009, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported 387,790 people, a 5 percent increase in "removals" (in the parlance of immigration officials) over the previous year.

President Obama may have made immigrant-friendly promises during the campaign, but viewed in the context of history, the deportations were practically inevitable. Anti-immigrant sentiment and immigration crackdowns have always paralleled America's economic fortunes. Immigrants have been welcomed during good times, only to find themselves vilified when times get tough.

In the latter part of the 19th century, nearly 250,000 migrants from China — many recruited by U.S. companies — crossed the Pacific Ocean to work in America's fields and mines and on the railroads. About 15,000 Chinese miners joined the California Gold Rush.

But after the boom went bust and an economic depression took hold, virulent anti-Chinese hatred — motivated by a combination of racism and the fear that Chinese workers were depressing wages — started in the West and rippled through national politics. Mobs attacked Chinese businesses and homes in San Francisco. The California Workingmen's Party adopted the slogan "The Chinese Must Go!" and rallies decrying the "Chinese curse" were held around California.

In an effort to bring a halt to most legal immigration from China, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. It was the first time that federal law had been used to control and limit migration to the United States by a particular nationality.

During World War I, agribusiness, worried about a labor shortage, prevailed on Herbert Hoover, then head of the U.S. Food Administration, to pressure Washington to open the migration valve and allow in more Mexican farmworkers.

But with the onset of the Depression at the end of the 1920s, Americans showed little tolerance for the migrants it had so recently courted. Hoover, now president, initiated a mass deportation program that continued into the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Immigration agents were ruthless in their raids, chasing down Latinos, ignoring due process and failing to distinguish between legal and nonlegal residents of the United States. Authorities deported as many as 1 million people.

The prosperous 1940s and 1950s gave birth to the Bracero Agreement, a "temporary" worker program to address World War II labor needs that ended up lasting 22 years.

But then an economic downturn at the end of the Korean War brought yet another crackdown. In 1954, President Eisenhower's immigration chief, retired Gen. Joseph "Jumpin' Joe" Swing, launched Operation Wetback. Government personnel rounded up migrants in border communities and deported them by bus, truck, train and ship, transporting them to the Mexican interior. By the time the deportations ended a few months after they began, the Immigration and Naturalization Service claimed to have forcibly removed 1.1 million Mexicans.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, migration from Mexico accelerated, pushed by economic conditions south of the border and fueled by relatively higher wages in the United States.

In 1981, as U.S. unemployment climbed, Attorney General William French Smith sounded the alarm: "We have lost control of our borders." As the country headed into a 16-month-long recession, the Reagan administration unveiled an immigration reform plan to combine increased enforcement with legalization. It took five years for President Reagan's Immigration Reform and Control Act to become law. During that time, the INS budget (measured in constant dollars) jumped by 28 percent.

The Reagan reforms did little if anything to stop illegal immigration, which ticked sharply upward in the early 1990s as a rise in the U.S. service economy created a need for low-skilled workers. The combination of continued migration and economic uncertainty made for a volatile political brew. In 1994, anti-immigration activists campaigned for a California ballot initiative designed to eliminate public social services for illegal migrants. Politicians seized on an emotional issue.

"They keep on coming!" an announcer ominously intoned over black-and-white video of Mexicans rushing across the border near San Diego, a campaign commercial for Republican California Gov. Pete Wilson, then running for re-election.

Stepped-up immigration enforcement was hardly a partisan issue. With initiatives such as Operation Blockade in El Paso, followed by Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego, President Clinton continued the militarization of the border, a pattern that continued under President Bush. In eight years, Bush more than doubled the staff of the Border Patrol, raising the total from about 9,000 to 20,000 agents, even as he unsuccessfully pushed for comprehensive immigration reform.

In the face of declining congressional prospects for his own reform package, Obama is using executive powers to follow through on his other immigration-related pledge to step up enforcement. In doing so, he is following a long bipartisan tradition: Namely, as goes the economy, so goes immigration policy.

Jeffrey Kaye is a journalist and the author of "Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration," to be published in April. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

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Saving Paradise in my Lent

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

Tonight from 8:30 for one hour, in every time zone westward, the world's population will turn off their electric appliances to observe a highly symbolic but powerful demonstration of a global climate awareness.

It is not personally a $-saving occasion as the cost of three votive candles exceeds what I would normally pay CUC for power. But that is hardly the point, is it? Intentionality in the use of electricity and the awareness that the supply is generated at a cost to individual and environment are enough to satisfy the pedagogical intent of the occasion. If I am really thrifty, I would join the throng at the American Memorial Park and bask in the glow and glitter of distant stars, saving the candles for another inspired occasion!

Rita Brock and Rebecca Parker, two theologically astute women and religious historians, wrote *Saving Paradise*, *How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*. This is particularly relevant to the season of Lent. In the last millennium, an overemphasis on the sanctity of martyrdom has created an idolatrous icon of the crucified Jesus at the expense of other equally important aspects of the Christian message.

A sanctified culture of violence evolved from Charlemagne's ascension in the Holy Roman Empire and the European Crusades to the Holy Lands—on the one hand, the avenging knight/avatar with sword/scimitar on hand galloping on his Clydesdale/Arabian charger/steed into the herd of infidels, and on the other, the melodramatic picture of the suffering martyr/servant for Deus /Allah. This sanctification of the culture of violence was true on all sides of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim battle lines on to our times.

The Stations of the Cross became standard fare of the *GeoZeus*/Jesus Passion Play and the overemphasis made villains out of the Jews that swept Europe until the fateful Holocaust of Nazi Germany. This must have been one of the reasons for the critics' aversion over Mel Gibson's cinematic extravagance in *The Passion of the Christ.*

The *New Yorker* magazine nailed the movie and its director by saying that "of Jesus' pain and martyrdom in the last 12 hours of his life, Gibson made a sickening death trip, a grim procession of treachery, beatings, blood, and agony. We watch a man slowly tortured to death. Gibson is so thoroughly fixated on the scourging and crushing of Christ that he falls in danger of altering Jesus' message of love into one of hate."

Excommunicated Dominican monk Matthew Fox essayed in *Original Blessing* that Augustine's dogmatic formulation of original sin has led to human existence being perceived as a veil of tears accompanied by the gnashing of teeth. We have made of Earth a landscape of the desolation of our souls, the endless corruption of our flesh, the total captivity of our spirit, awaiting only to be redeemed and justified in the by-and-by of the other world on the other side of earthly life. Elaborate travel programs from here to there constitute the mission and *raison d'etre* of the Christian *ecclesia.*

Fox's insight got buried by millennial pietistic practices that combined historic Anglo-Saxon aggression, Iberian volcanic passion, Teutonic rationalization, and Gaelic melancholy. Deemed unworthy by the Vatican, Fox become a Bay Area Episcopalian contemplative.

Now comes a complimentary thesis from Brock and Parker that shows the visual art form of the first millennium of Christian dispensation reveals a "God (who) blessed the Earth with the breath of Spirit. It permeated the entire cosmos…. In early Christian understandings, even heaven was a dimension of this life; it was the mysterious abode of God from which blessing flowed upon the earth…." The vindicating research work to Fox's insight, the duo beckons the faithful "to return home to paradise with us…."

Nobel Peace Prize awardee Al Gore, erstwhile VP for the ebullient Bill Clinton, wrote three bestsellers after leaving office. *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit, An Inconvenient Truth,* and *The Assault on Reason,* is evidently in the business of saving paradise Earth. In his widely acclaimed latest, *Our Choice, A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis,* he is clear that "we have at our fingertips all of the tools we need to solve the climate crisis. The only missing ingredient is collective will.

Saving Paradise Saipan is not a book I am about to write, nor am I aware of anyone else wanting to write it. I do not relish flying solo and I see no evidence of a collective will. Besides, there might no longer be a paradise to save.

In my daily routine of swimming at the lagoon, I get a chance to snorkel into a lot of debris on the ocean floor. It might be instructive for a high school diver to make a project of gathering all the old family-size beer bottles and recent ones, and catalogue them according to year of consumption. That would make a good project in my Social Studies class.

I also run into a lot of characters out to celebrate something at the end of the day with the ubiquitous BBQ and Bud. I watched a group of established adults the other day, and by their attire and vehicles, they were very well established indeed. The all male gathering, save for a lone female who looked like she was dragged into the occasion, frolicked in the late afternoon, male bonding around a bonfire, casting their leftover tendons to the hovering dogs (organic, and as the Gringos say west of the Pecos, *no hay problemo*), and throwing aluminum cans into the vine covered sand (big problem). It would have been imprudent to offer the plastic bags in my pickup. I was not around when they finally doused the coals so I am not quite sure they cleaned up their leavings. I returned the following day to a litter that indicated they were too inebriated to bother!

As this season of Lent invites all the Christian faithful to exercise the humbling force of knee-down power, (an exercise many in other faiths and persuasion, of the absence thereof, are familiar with) it would be well to meditate on saving paradise—the planet, our island, and our souls. *Dominus Vobiscum.*

Letters to the Editor

An exercise in futility

It was an emotional afternoon at the House of Representatives Thursday afternoon. There I sat, along with dozens of educators, administrators, BOE representatives, PTA representatives, and parents. All of us were there for one purpose: to oppose H.B. 17-45, the austerity bill that proposes to cut salaries by 12.5 percent across the board. Many came forward and offered compelling testimony as to why this bill should not pass. Others came for moral support. But our PSS familia was not alone. We also heard from representatives of NMC, the NMI Retirement Fund, the Judiciary, and the CNMI's parole board.

Let it be known that the House majority is correct on one thing: This is a very tough pill to swallow. Rep. Ramon Basa and his colleagues who narrowly passed this bill argued that it is best to let everyone bear the brunt of our economic quagmire by cutting everyone's salaries. They assert that this is the only viable option left to avoid furloughs or payless paydays. Their intentions may be noble, but their assertion is flawed. But don't take my word for it. Here are a few points made by community members who oppose H.B. 17-45:

■ H.B. 17-45 punishes the poor. The hardest who will be hit by this bill are families considered low-income. Employees who are barely surviving on $11,000 a year will now be only making $9,625. That translates to $370 a paycheck. But subtract taxes and insurance and retirement and they are left with no more than $300 a paycheck. Now imagine this person pulling in only $300 a paycheck as a single parent with kids to feed. The sad thing is that this is not an isolated example. There are a ton of people in this predicament, who are making very little as it is. Think about our neighbors on Rota, who have to pay as much as $50 for a sack of rice and nearly $4 for a can of Spam. They can't just quit their government job and go look for a better-paying job in the private sector on Rota because no such jobs exist! They will most likely have to pack their bags and do what hundreds of other families have done—move to the mainland and live with their extended families.

■ H.B. 17-45 will have a ripple effect in the economy. The government may save $3 million to $4 million annually by cutting salaries, but it may stand to lose more than that in lost revenue. Why? Sheer economic panic. When salaries are cut, people cut down or stop going to restaurants, bars, flower shops, the movie theater, the beauty parlor, etc. This means that less money will be circulated in our economy. More businesses will close as a result, which means less taxes for our government to collect. If people buy less, the cost of goods will continue to escalate. If you think a can of Spam is expensive today, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

■ H.B 17-45 is unfair. While lawmakers argue that this is the only way to avoid payless paydays, they forget one of the golden rules of a statesman, which is to *promote fairness*. While the poor will get poorer and businesses will close as a result of this bill, our lawmakers and our judges will not suffer along with the rest of us. Why? Because their salaries are "constitutionally protected." Judges will continue to make well over $100,000 a year, and lawmakers will continue to make at least $39,000 a year, not to mention all the perks that are attached to their salary. Sure, some lawmakers will volunteer a pay cut. But I can assure you, there will be several who will not. As I recall from the last austerity measure put in place, one lawmaker said he won't cut his salary because his wife would not let him. Our lawmakers will have an option to volunteer a pay cut. But we, the common and poor folk, will not. This bill is not fair, to say the very least.

Those who support H.B. 17-45 will continue to preach that there was no other alternative but to cut salaries. But if you sat and listened to the testimonies, you would have heard different suggestions by community members. Here are only a few:

■ Stop leasing office space from private buildings and utilize existing government houses and buildings as offices. There are tons of government-owned houses and buildings on Capital Hill and in Garapan. Renovation may be necessary, but in the long run, it will save us millions. Have work staff lend a helping hand to renovate and cut down on costs for renovation.

■ Cut down the size of the CNMI Legislature, or create a part-time legislature. If states as big as Texas can operate on a part-time legislature, then why can't the CNMI? Almost $10 million is allocated for the Legislature's budget. Do we trim education or do we trim politics?

■ Allow every government agency to cut their budget on their own. Give every government agency the freedom to make their own budget cuts. Some agencies may be able to cut down on expenses rather than salaries, and they have better, more in-depth knowledge about their budgets.

■ Eliminate political consultants and stop hiring. The CNMI government continues to fill jobs that are considered non-essential. Political consultants and deputy secretaries cannot be considered essential. There are enough intelligent, highly-skilled members of our community who are willing to give free advice. All our leaders have to do is ask.

Part of being a great leader is carefully examining all angles before rendering any decision. H.B. 17-45 was hastily put together and voted on, without getting proper feedback by the people who matter the most: the B.O.V., or Board of Voters. Why are forums or townhall meetings so difficult to hold? It costs little more than time and a willingness to listen and to dig deep to find solutions to our problems. It also shows that our leaders truly care about us. Allowing testimonials up at Capital Hill during work hours just does not cut it.

Please know that the intent of this letter is not to denigrate our lawmakers. The intent of this letter is to ask our leaders to go back to the drawing board to dissect, re-examine, and re-evaluate H.B. 17-45. Exhaust all other options before cutting salaries that will decimate lower income families who are already suffering enough as it is. Think about the repercussions this will have on our public school system. Can we honestly put a price on our children's education? In this tough world economy, education is our best bet for economic salvation. For this reason alone, education is priceless!

H.B. 17-45 will go to the Senate now, and I urge our senators to do the right thing. Carefully examine this bill and all other options. Talk to your constituents. Hold a forum or a townhall meeting on an evening or weekend so that community members can come together to discuss this bill. We will be there.

I'm sorry to say this, but a friend of mine advised me not to waste my time in testifying. "Ed, once they have the numbers, they have the numbers. This is an exercise in futility." Please, for once, prove the skeptics wrong. Show us the difference between a politician and a statesman. Fight for fairness, and do what is right.

Ed Propst
Dandan, Saipan

P.S. I would be remiss if I did not mention our lawmakers who opposed the passage of H.B. 17-45 and provided valid arguments against this bill. Thank you Representatives Diego Benavente, Joseph Deleon Guerrero, Trenton O' Conner, Francisco Dela Cruz, Joseph Palacios, Antonio Sablan, Ray Tebuteb, and Ray Yumul.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

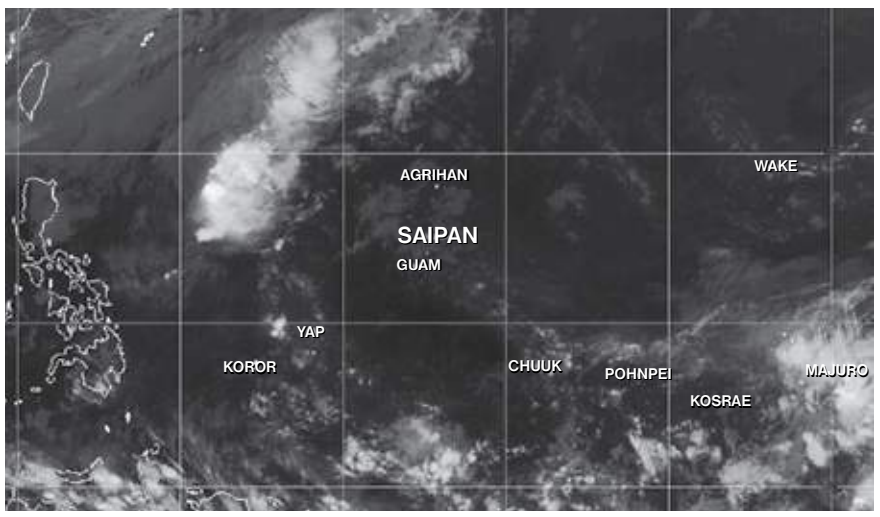
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲85	▼77
Palau	Thundershowers	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲90	▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼80
Kosrae	Showers	▲85	▼80
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼81

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲73	▼62
Beijing	Sunny	▲59	▼32
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲75	▼59
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼69
London	Showers	▲52	▼43
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲78	▼52
Manila	Thundershowers	▲88	▼75
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲77	▼59
Miami	Cloudy	▲80	▼65
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼37
Osaka	Showers	▲55	▼39
Paris	Showers	▲53	▼42
Pusan	Cloudy	▲52	▼42
Rome	Showers	▲63	▼49
Salem	Cloudy	▲66	▼48
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲66	▼51
Seoul	Cloudy	▲51	▼32
Tokyo	Showers	▲49	▼41
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲54	▼43

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Tropical Storm Omais (02W) is centered well north of Koror near 16N132E with maximum sustained winds of 40 mph. Omais is moving north-northeastward at 5 mph. Heavy showers and isolated thunderstorms are located near and north of the center between 16N and 20N from 132E to 136E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found farther out within 350 miles of the center. For more information on Tropical Storm Omais, see public advisories issued by the National Weather Service under WMO header WTPQ31 PGUM and bulletins issued by the JTWC under WMO header WTPN31 PGTW. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over Yap within 50 miles of a line from 11N137E to 5N143E south of Chuuk within 100 miles of a line from 4N146E to EQ150E and finally over Pohnpei and Kosrae between the equator and 8N from 156E to 164E. A surface trough stretches northeastward from 20N168E to 25N172E. Scattered showers are found just northeast of Wake Island near the trough axis between 21N and 23N from 166E to 173E. Another surface trough extends northward from EQ168E to 7N168E. Scattered heavy showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring over Tarawa and Majuro between 7N and the equator from 165E to 178E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:54 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
11:43 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
5:05 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:57 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:17 AM	6:29 PM
Sunday	6:16 AM	6:29 PM
Monday	6:15 AM	6:29 PM
Tuesday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Wednesday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	3:40 PM	3:38 AM
Sunday	4:40 PM	4:23 AM
Monday	5:39 PM	5:08 AM
Tuesday	6:38 PM	5:52 AM
Wednesday	7:38 PM	6:37 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 23, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

DL638	8:00am	10:55am	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	5:50am	8:40am	Daily
DL638/288	8:00am	1:40pm	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via NGO
DL297	4:35pm	7:30pm	Daily
DL289	4:50pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:20am	6:10am	1
OZ604	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	8:40pm	Daily via GUM
OZ606/703	3:20pm	10:55pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

DL641	9:05pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL290	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
DL298	10:15am	2:45pm	Daily
DL287/641	5:50pm	1:35am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via NGO
DL288	9:00pm	1:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:40am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
C0934/9596	10:55pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4 ,6 ,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

Sunday	5:30am-6:30am	
Morning prayer		
	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service,

Koblerville

Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

March 27, 2000

JAL brings in add'l 3,000 tourists to NMI
Standing pat on its commitment to continuously help facilitate the recovery of Northern Marianas' tourism industry from a catastrophic slump, Japan Airlines is hoping to bring in additional 3,000 travelers to the islands for this month. The additional deplanement figures are expected to come from the 13 extra flights the air carrier scheduled to deploy between major cities in Japan and Saipan for the whole month of March. In February, JAL has provided 17 additional flights on top of its daily direct flights between Japan and Saipan, according to Commonwealth Ports Authority Executive Director Carlos H. Salas.

NMC hopes to offer its own 4-year education program
The Northern Marianas College is drawing near to securing a permit from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges to offer its own four-year degree program on education, according to NMC acting President Jack Sablan. Mr. Sablan disclosed that a group of education experts from the Senior Commission of the mainland United States-based WASC will be arriving on Saipan in October to conduct an assessment of the College's capability to offer a bachelor's degree program. "We have invited them to come and see what we're doing. We want them to know that we are trying to comply with their expectations. Want to know if they are satisfied with our progress," he said.

March 27, 2001

NMIRF losing $1M each year
The NMI Retirement Fund is losing an estimated $1 million annually due to high operational costs and delayed payment of medical services, to the detriment of its medical referral program. The money, which should have been used to replenish coffers for the medical referral program, is instead used to finance operation run the Retirement Fund. But Board Chair Vicente Camacho assured the agency is exerting extra efforts to save the medical referral program from disintegration by looking into other sources of funding. In an interview, Mr. Camacho said NMIRF officials are exploring alternatives to resolve problems faced by the medical referral program, as well as other ways to increase the agency's revenues.

Tinian backs moves to increase MVA funding
There is a need to improve the revenue generating capacity of the government to ensure funding of $14 million for promotional activities of the Commonwealth's tourism industry. In fact, both the Senate and the House of Representatives should increase CNMI's projected revenue to account for the needed funds intended to cushion Marianas Visitors Authority's coffers. In a letter to House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, Tinian Mayor Francisco M. Borja urged the House of Representatives to support a bill seeking to restructure the organization of MVA in hopes to make it more effective. The mayor cited the distinct set of tourism problems that Saipan, Tinian and Rota encounter and the need to implement a new workable approach that will accommodate the needs, concerns and interests of each islands.

March 27, 2002

Fund's overseas portfolio hiccups
Reflecting the number of upheavals buffeting the international business landscape at the time, overseas investments of the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund hiccupped and slid by a minuscule .8 percent in January. From the $346.79 million posted in December 2001, the market value of the Fund's overseas portfolio went down to $343.88 million, or a difference of $2.92 million. The small drop, however, only seems to reflect a resiliency in the Fund's overseas investments, considering that it was in January when the worst of the U.S. recession was laying waste to several big companies and conglomerates, including K-Mart.

West Tinian airport completion nears
The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in coordination with Tinian local officials and Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino executives, is finalizing legworks for direct international flights to the island. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said the ports authority has been working closely with tourism industry players on the island in preparation to the official opening of the new West Tinian International Airport. This, he said as completion of the airport improvement project is anticipated to be finished ahead of schedule. Salas said the runway would be completed by September.

Business

Eurozone agrees on a bailout plan for Greece

BRUSSELS (AP)—Countries that use the euro said Thursday they have agreed on a financial backstop for Greece that would combine loans from other eurozone governments and the International Monetary Fund, a move aimed at stopping the government debt crisis that has undermined the shared currency.

The bailout program could be used only if Greece winds up shut out of normal market financing such as selling government bonds, and would require all 16 countries to agree on releasing the loan funds.

It also calls for tougher rules to keep government finances from getting out of control and causing another crisis—one key weakness in the euro that has been exposed by the current troubles.

The plan, pushed by Germany and France, was an attempt to stem a government debt crisis that has raised concerns that Greece's woes might spread to other euro governments with shaky finances, such as Portugal and Spain, raising borrowing costs and worsening the large debt loads governments have taken on as a result of three years of global economic turmoil.

A Greek default would be a serious blow to the euro—so serious that most economists and market analysts think Europeran governments would step in and stop it somehow, but promises of help had been vague until now.

German, Portuguese, Spanish and Greek officials confirmed a deal at a Thursday summit of European Union leaders. They gave few details ahead of formal announcement of the deal. It was unclear whether the formal announcement would come later Thursday.

Portugal's prime minister Jose Socrates told reporters all the 16 countries using the euro would contribute—including his indebted nation. "The interest rates will be reasonable and not speculative," he said.

Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou said the rescue plan was "very satisfactory."

Germany and France earlier urged adoption of a loan package for Greece or other financially troubled nations using the euro would only come as a last resort when the country cannot borrow enough from financial markets, according to a draft text seen by the Associated Press.

The text does not promise cheap loans to Greece—which wants to borrow at rates lower than those demanded by bond investors wary of the country's shaky finances.

Companies say health care costs are 'hard to swallow'

By JOSH FUNK
AP BUSINESS WRITER

The health care overhaul will cost U.S. companies billions and make them more likely to drop prescription drug coverage for retirees because of a change in how the government subsidizes those benefits.

In the first two days after the law was signed, three major companies—Deere & Co., Caterpillar Inc. and Valero Energy—said they expect to take a total hit of $265 million to account for smaller tax deductions in the future.

With more than 3,500 companies now getting the tax break as an incentive to keep providing coverage, others are almost certain to announce similar cost increases in the weeks ahead as they sort out the impact of the change.

Figuring out what it will mean for retirees will take longer, but analysts said as many as 2 million could lose the prescription drug coverage provided by their former employers, leaving them to enroll in Medicare's program.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs defended the tax law change Thursday, saying the original provision allowing companies to deduct the federal subsidies from their taxable income was a "loophole" that will be closed by the health care overhaul.

For the government, the tax changes are expected to raise roughly $4.5 billion over the next decade to help pay for the health overhaul. Some of the savings would be negated by retirees enrolling in the Medicare plans.

"You're increasing the incentive for companies to say 'We don't want to be in the health care business any more,'" said James Gelfand, senior manager of health policy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which fought the overhaul.

American industrial companies that are struggling to compete globally against companies with much lower labor costs are particularly likely to eventually drop retiree coverage, said Gene Imhoff, an accounting professor at the University of Michigan.

"Anything that they can use to justify pushing something away from the employees, pushing it back on the employees or the government, they're going to do it," Imhoff said. "I'm not sure you can really blame them for trying to do this."

Nation

Congress completes overhaul of health care

WASHINGTON (AP)—Capping an epic struggle, congressional Democrats put the final touches Thursday to historic legislation enshrining health care as the right of every citizen. Republicans vowed to campaign for repeal in the fall election season, drawing a quick retort from President Barack Obama: "I welcome that fight."

The president spoke in Iowa as the Senate voted 56-43 for legislation making changes, including better benefits for seniors and low-income and middle-class families, to the bill he signed into law with a flourish at the White House on Tuesday.

The House added its approval a few hours later, 220-207, clearing the way for Obama's signature on the second of two bills that marked the culmination of what the president called "a year of debate and a century of trying" to ensure coverage for nearly all in a nation where millions lack it. Obama is expected to sign the legislation early next week.

Taken together, the two bills also aim to crack down on insurance industry abuses and to reduce federal deficits by an estimated $143 billion over a decade. Most Americans would be required to buy insurance for the first time, and face penalties if they refused.

AP

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev., center, speaks during a health care reform news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 25, 2010. From left are, Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich, Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., Reid, Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., and Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont.

The second of the two bills also presented Obama with another victory, stripping banks and other private lenders of their ability to originate student loans in favor of a system of direct government lending.

After a monthslong battle in Congress, the political struggle was morphing into a new phase, where public debate was tinged with violence—and politicians accused one another of seeking to exploit it for their own advantage.

Apart from their impact on nearly every American and an estimated one-sixth of the American economy, the week's events marked Obama's biggest political triumphs since he took office more than a year ago. A pending arms control agreement with Russia, announced on Wednesday, added to his resume, and White House officials said they hoped the momentum would translate into further political successes in the run-up to the midterm elections.

More than 10 lawmakers in the House said they had received threats or worse as a consequence of the health care debate, most of them Democrats who voted in favor of the legislation. There were reports of bricks through windows, a cut propane line to a grill and numerous obscene and threatening phone calls and faxes. An undisclosed number of lawmakers were under increased police protection.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and the GOP leader, Rep. John Boehner of Ohio, both denounced the threats and incidents of violence. But Democrats said Republicans had been too slow to respond, drawing an outraged response in return.

"By ratcheting up the rhetoric, some will only inflame these situations to dangerous levels," said Republican Whip Eric Cantor of Virginia. "Enough is enough. It has to stop."

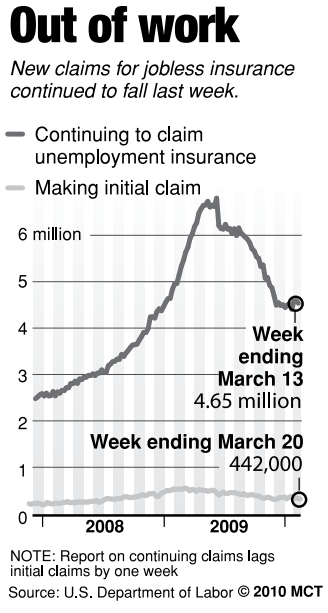
An aide to Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, head of the Democratic 2010 campaign effort, responded: "This is straight out of the Republicans' political playbook of deflecting responsibility and distracting attention away from a serious issue." "Repeal and replace" was the new slogan for Republicans as they pivoted away from earlier attempts to kill the health care legislation. Officials said it was meant to appeal to tea party activists—who staged an occasionally unruly demonstration outside the Capitol over the weekend—as well as to independent voters eager for changes in the health care system but fearful the Democrats went too far.

Senate Republican holds up jobless benefits

WASHINGTON (AP)—As Congress raced to leave Washington for its Easter recess, a Republican senator blocked a stopgap bill to extend jobless benefits, saying its $9 billion cost should not be added to the national debt.

As a result, some people who have been out of work for more than six months will at least temporarily lose benefits. Newly jobless people won't be eligible to sign up for generous health insurance subsidies.

At the center of the battle is Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who's insisting that the measure be "paid for" so as not to add to the nation's $12.7 trillion debt.



"What we are doing is stealing future opportunity from our children," Coburn said Thursday.

Republicans offered legislation to finance the monthlong extension of jobless benefits by rescinding unspent money from last year's economic stimulus bill. The effort was killed on a party-line vote.

Democrats repeatedly sought speedy Senate approval of a House-passed measure that would extend jobless benefits through May 5, but Coburn objected. Republicans said Senate negotiations produced a compromise that didn't pass muster in the House.

Jim Manley, a spokesman for Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the Senate would attempt to retroactively bestow the jobless benefits when it returns from its spring recess April 12.

The practical effect of the lapse in benefits would be limited if they are awarded retroactively. But labor advocates say it produces bureacratic nightmares for state labor departments and that trying to restore the lapsed benefits is easier said than done.

Reid had the option of keeping the Senate in session to force a vote to try to break through the GOP blocking tactics but instead will revisit the issue in 2 1/2 weeks.

US priest accused of molesting 200 deaf boys

ST. FRANCIS, Wisconsin (AP)—Arthur Budzinski says the first time the priest molested him, he was 12 years old, alone and away from home at a school for the deaf. He says he asked the Rev. Lawrence Murphy to hear his confession, and instead the priest took him into a closet under the stairs and sexually assaulted him.

Budzinski, now 61, was one of about 200 deaf boys at the St. John's School for the Deaf just outside Milwaukee who say they were molested by the priest decades ago in a case now creating a scandal for the Vatican and threatening to ensnare Pope Benedict XVI.

Some of the allegations became public years ago. But they got renewed attention this week after documents obtained by The New York Times showed that Murphy was spared a defrocking in the mid-1990s because he was protected by the Vatican office led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now the pope.

The Vatican on Thursday strongly defended its decision not to defrock Murphy and denounced what it called a campaign to smear the pope and his aides.

In recent weeks, Benedict has also come under fire over his handling of an abuse case against a priest in Germany three decades ago when he was a cardinal in charge of the Munich Archdiocese.

The New York Times report-

McCain, Palin to campaign together in Arizona

PHOENIX (AP)—John McCain and Sarah Palin will be back on the campaign trail Friday, their first time campaigning together since McCain lost the presidential election a year and a half ago with Palin as his running mate.

This time, they have a different prize in sight: McCain's Senate seat.

The Arizona senator is in the midst of the toughest re-election battle of his Senate career, facing a primary challenge from the right. Former congressman and conservative talk-radio host J.D. Hayworth points to McCain's reputation for working with Democrats and says he is too moderate for Arizona Republicans.

Palin, the former governor of Alaska, joins McCain after an epic battle in Congress over President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, which McCain and Palin both opposed.

She'll help McCain trump his conservative credentials at rallies in Tucson on Friday and the Phoenix suburb of Mesa on Saturday. They'll hold a fundraiser Friday at the same Phoenix hotel where they conceded the presidential election on Nov. 4, 2008.

ACROSS THE NATION

FAA issues safety warning for homemade planes

WASHINGTON (AP)—High-performance homemade planes like the one that killed a beach jogger last week in South Carolina are prone to stall, especially when going slower while waiting to land, and have been involved in a disproportionately large number of fatal accidents, federal officials warned Thursday. The Federal Aviation Administration said in a safety advisory to pilots that the Lancair, which is built from kits, and others like it have design characteristics that allow the planes to fly much faster than most small planes. However, the agency says, those characteristics can also "expose pilots to additional risk during slowspeed operations while close to the ground and with little time to recover from an unintentional stall." The agency also cautioned that since the planes are built by amateurs each one "may have unique flight handling characteristics."

Calif. pot vote isn't just hippies versus cops

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Now that a proposal to legalize pot is on the ballot in California, well-organized groups are lining up on both sides of the debate. And it's not just tie-dyed hippies versus anti-drug crusaders. So far, the most outspoken groups on the issue are those affiliated with California's le al medical marijuana industry and law enforcement officials who vehemently oppose any loosening of drug laws. But the campaign that unfolds before the November election could yield some unusual allies: free-market libertarians joining police officers frustrated by the drug war to support the measure, and pot growers worried about falling prices pairing with Democratic politicians to oppose it. Others believe legalizing and taxing the drug could improve the state's flagging economy.

RI Indians want valuable Navy property in Newport

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP)—Hundreds of prime acres are up for grabs in this waterfront city and its neighboring towns, valuable commodity on an island known for prized beaches, lavish homes and natural beauty. The 260 acres on Aquidneck Island were for decades owned by the U.S. Navy, which says it no longer needs the land and is moving to unload it. The island communities envision the property as untapped economic potential for sweeping new development. But another suitor—the Narragansett Indian Tribe—says the land falls under its ancestral footprint and is mounting a bid that may conflict with local development plans.

Asia

AP

South Korean businessmen wearing sashes that read "Guarantee our property rights" enter an immigration office to cross the border into North Korea in Goseong, South Korea, Thursday, March 25, 2010.

NKorea vows 'nuclear strikes' in latest threat

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea's military warned South Korea and the United States on Friday of "unprecedented nuclear strikes" over a report the two countries plan to prepare for possible instability in the totalitarian country.

The North routinely issues such warnings and officials in Seoul and Washington react calmly. Diplomats in South Korea and the U.S. instead have repeatedly called on Pyongyang to return to international negotiations aimed at ending its nuclear programs.

"Those who seek to bring down the system in the (North), whether they play a main role or a passive role, will fall victim to the unprecedented nuclear strikes of the invincible army," North Korea's military said in comments carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The North, believed have enough weaponized plutonium for at least half a dozen atomic bombs, conducted its second atomic test last year, drawing tighter U.N. sanctions.

Experts from South Korea, the U.S. and China will meet in China next month to share information on North Korea, assess possible contingencies in the country, and consider ways to cooperate in case of an emergency situation, South Korea's Dong-a Ilbo newspaper reported earlier this month, citing unidentified sources in Seoul and Beijing. The experts will also hold follow-up meetings in Seoul in June and in Honolulu in July, it said.

The North Korean statement Friday specifically referred to the March 19 newspaper report.

A spokeswoman said the South Korean Defense Ministry had no information.

South Korean media have reported that Seoul has drawn up a military operations plan with the United States to cope with possible emergencies in the North. The North says the U.S. plots to topple its regime, a claim Washington has consistently denied.

Bangladesh sets up war crimes tribunal

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—Bangladesh set up a war crimes tribunal Thursday for long-delayed trials of people accused of murder, torture, rape and arson during its 1971 independence war.

Three High Court judges will sit in the tribunal, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told reporters, without specifying when trials would begin. The government also appointed six retired civil, police and military officials to investigate war crimes charges.

The government has already barred about 50 war crimes suspects mostly belonging to the country's main Islamic party, Jamaat-e-Islami, from leaving the country. Jamaat-e-Islami had sided with Pakistani troops against whom Bangladesh fought the independence war.

On March 26, 1971, Bangladesh—then East Pakistan—declared its independence from West Pakistan, following years of perceived political and economic discrimination.

Bangladesh official figures say Pakistani soldiers, aided by local collaborators, killed an estimated 3 million people, raped about 200,000 women and forced millions more to flee their homes during a bloody nine-month guerrilla war. With help from neighbor India, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation on Dec. 16, 1971, with the surrender of the Pakistani army in Dhaka.

An amnesty was declared after the war for collaborators who were not directly involved in heinous crimes. It did not cover those who had specific charges or evidence of crimes against them.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Chinese man gets death for killing snoring student

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese university student who stabbed his sleeping roommate to death because he snored too much was given a suspended death sentence, state media reported Friday. The court in Changchun, capital of northeast Jilin province, handed down the sentence to 24-year-old Guo Liwei who confessed to stabbing his roommate to death in November, the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. A suspended death sentence is usually changed to life in prison after two years, if the person shows good behavior.

Pakistan: 5 soldiers, 21 alleged militants killed

PARACHINAR, Pakistan (AP)—Five Pakistani soldiers and at least 21 suspected militants were killed in clashes in a region near the Afghan border where the military is pursuing Taliban insurgents fleeing a U.S.-backed offensive, authorities said Friday. The reports came a day after officials said 61 suspected militants died in airstrikes in the same region, Orakzai, and underscored the challenge facing Pakistan as it tries to wipe out Pakistani Taliban fighters bent on overthrowing the state. Local government official Sami Ullah said the fighting occurred after dawn Friday when militants attacked a checkpoint. He said at least 27 militants died. But an army statement said 21 insurgents were killed, and the clashes occurred when security forces were trying to recapture a checkpoint taken Thursday night by militants in the Kalaya area of Orakzai.

Indonesian zoo welcomes birth of 25 Komodo dragons

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian zoo is welcoming the births of 25 endangered Komodo dragons, hatched after eight months in incubators. Veterinarian Rahmat Suharta says the eggs, from three giant female lizards, hatched at the Surabaya Zoo in East Java over the past week. He said Thursday that the babies, weighing between 2.8 ounces (80 grams) and 4.2 ounces (120 grams), brought to 69 the number of the giant lizards at the zoo, one of the largest in Southeast Asia. Eleven more eggs are expected to hatch in coming weeks.

World

Sex abuse scandal in US, Italy taints papacy

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Revelations that the Vatican halted the investigation of a Wisconsin priest accused of molesting some 200 deaf boys have eerie echoes in Italy, where 67 deaf men and women accused two dozen priests of raping and molesting children for years.

Only now—a year after the Italian case became public—is the Vatican directing the diocese to interview the victims to hear their testimony about the accusations, The Associated Press learned Thursday.

The two cases are the latest in a burgeoning abuse scandal on both sides of the Atlantic that now threatens to tarnish the papacy itself. The office charged with disciplining clergy was long led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, and a church prosecution in the Wisconsin case was stopped after an appeal to Ratzinger.

The Vatican strongly defended Benedict on Thursday and denounced what it said was a concerted campaign to smear him and his aides for a problem that Rome insists is not unique to the Catholic Church.

Benedict's actions have been marked by "transparency, firmness and severity in shedding light on the various cases of sexual abuse committed by priests and clergymen," the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano said in a front-page article.

It lashed out at what it said was a "prevailing trend in the media" to ignore facts and spread an image of the Catholic Church "as if it were the only one responsible for sexual abuses—an image that does not correspond to reality."

The Vatican was responding to the release of documents, first reported by The New York Times, that showed how the pope's former office told a Wisconsin bishop to shut down a church trial against the Rev. Lawrence Murphy, a Milwaukee priest accused of molesting some 200 deaf boys from 1950 to 1975.

Murphy died in 1998, two years after Ratzinger first learned of the accusations, and more than 20 years after they came to the attention of the Milwaukee diocese.

Bin Laden threatens US over alleged 9/11 plotter

CAIRO (AP)—Osama bin Laden threatened in a new message released Thursday to kill any Americans al-Qaida captures if the U.S. executes the self-professed mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks or other al-Qaida suspects.

In the 74-second audiotape aired on Al-Jazeera television, the al-Qaida leader explicitly mentions Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who was captured in Pakistan in 2003. He is the most senior al-Qaida operative in U.S. custody and is currently detained at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 2008, the U.S. charged Mohammed with murder and war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. Pentagon officials have said they will seek the death penalty for him. Four of his fellow plotters are also in custody.

"The White House has expressed its desire to execute them. The day America makes that decision will be the day it has issued a death sentence for any one of you that is taken captive," Bin Laden said, addressing Americans.

After his March 2003 capture in Pakistan, Mohammed described himself as the architect of numerous terrorism plots and even claimed that "with my blessed right hand," he had decapitated Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Pearl was found beheaded in Pakistan in 2002.

Mohammed, appearing in June 2008 for the first time since his capture five years earlier, said he would welcome becoming a "martyr" after a judge warned him that he faces the death penalty for his confessed role as mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Mexico arrests 'King of Heroin,' with ties to US

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Federal police have arrested Mexico's "King of Heroin," a powerful drug trafficker allegedly responsible for running thousands of pounds of heroin into Southern California each year, authorities said Thursday.

Jose Antonio Medina, nicknamed "Don Pepe," was arrested in the western state of Michoacan on Wednesday and is being held for prosecution, said Ramon Pequeno, head of the anti-narcotics division of Mexico's federal police.

Medina, 36, ran a complex smuggling operation that hauled 440 pounds (200 kilograms) of heroin each month across the Mexican border in Tijuana for La Familia drug cartel, Pequeno said.

The White House National Drug Threat Assessment says that while heroin use is stable or decreasing in the U.S., the source of the drug has shifted in recent years from Colombia—where production and purity are declining—to Mexico, where powerful drug cartels are gaining a foothold in the lucrative market.

WORLD BRIEFS

Anti-Chavez TV channel owner arrested in Venezuela

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—The owner of Venezuela's only remaining TV channel that takes a critical line against President Hugo Chavez was arrested Thursday, raising concerns the government is pursuing a widening crackdown to silence opponents. Guillermo Zuloaga, owner of Globovision, was arrested on a warrant for remarks that were deemed "offensive" to the president, Attorney General Luisa Ortega said. Zuloaga said military intelligence agents detained him at an airport in the northwestern state of Falcon as he was preparing to fly on his private plane with his wife to the Caribbean island of Bonaire, where they planned to vacation.

Jailers: 40 inmates escape in Mexican border town

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Police were searching for two prison guards and 40 prisoners who disappeared after a pre-dawn jailbreak Thursday in the Mexican city of Matamoros across the border from Brownsville, Texas. Prison director Orlando Saucedo Pinto was put on temporary pending an investigation into how the prisoners got away, Mexican prison officials said at a news conference. Prison staff were also being investigated, they said. The federal Attorney General's Office said in a statement Thursday night that 40 prisoners escaped, while local authorities had earlier put the number at 41.

US slave ship replica sails into Old Havana harbor

HAVANA (AP)—A U.S. replica of the 19th century Cuban slave ship Amistad glided into the millpond-calm waters of Havana Bay and docked Thursday, a reminder of the countries' intertwined past and perhaps a small gesture toward a brighter shared future. Built in Connecticut, the black-hulled, two-masted re-creation of the schooner, whose name means "Friendship," flew the flags of the United States, Cuba and United Nations. It was one of the few times a ship under Cuba's flag and the Stars and Stripes has called on the island in 51 years of estrangement since Fidel Castro took power. As the Amistad neared shore, the crew of 19 mostly students—all Americans except for one from the African nation of Sierra Leone—lowered the sails, taking the U.S. flag down with them. Once the ship docked, however, the flags of both nations again flew high. "Sorry, I don't speak much Spanish," a grinning Capt. William Pinkney said in grammatically correct, if halting, Spanish, as he stepped ashore. Pinkney, Amistad's captain emeritus, led the journey into Havana.

Maharlika
PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS
Saturday, March 27, 2010

RP consulate gears up for absentee voting in NMI

The Philippine Consulate General on Saipan shall be conducting overseas absentee voting for the president, the vice president, 12 senators and a partylist in connection with the elections in the Philippines on May 10, 2010.

Overseas absentee voting for registered Filipinos in the CNMI will be through postal voting. The schedule of overseas voting in the CNMI shall be from April 10 to May 10, 2010.

Ballots have been sent by the Commission on Election to the Philippine Consulate General. The certified list of overseas absentee voters appears in the Comelec Web site (www.comelec.gov.ph) and may also be viewed at the consulate.

From March 22, 2010, to May 10, 2010 (during office hours Mondays to Fridays excluding holidays), the ballots and corresponding instructions may be personally claimed at the consulate. Voters are advised to bring their passport or voter's ID to the consulate for proper identification.

Registered overseas absentee voters may also claim their ballots at the consulate on the following special schedules:

- March 28 and April 25 (Sunday during the Sunday Consular Services): 9am to 4pm

Filipino absentee voters who cannot personally pick up their ballots on these schedules are asked to call the consulate at 234-1848 to make arrangements on the method of claiming their ballots. Look for Romeo Garchitorena, Violaflor Enerlan-Ancheta or Lauren Arce.

Starting April 10, 2010, accomplished ballots could either be:

a. Sent by mail directly to the consulate (P.O. Box 500731 CK, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950 CNMI, USA); or

b. Brought directly to the consulate (5th floor, Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe, Saipan).

Accomplished ballots shall be received at the consulate on the following dates:

- April 10 (Saturday, first day): 8am to 4pm;
- Mondays to Fridays excluding holidays: 9am to 5pm.;
- April 25, 2010 (Sunday, during the Consular Services): 9am to 4pm;
- May 10, 2010 (last day): 8am to 8pm.

Counting and canvassing of votes shall be held at the ground floor of the Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe, Saipan on May 10, 2010, at 8pm. Counting and canvassing of votes shall be undertaken continuously until all ballots have been counted and canvassed.

The canvassed results of the overseas absentee voting in the CNMI shall be brought directly by the chairman of the Special Board of Canvassers to the Senate of the Philippines and the Comelec in Manila on the first available flight from Saipan to Manila after the canvassing of votes.

The Philippine Consulate General urges all registered Filipino overseas absentee voters to exercise their right to vote and to vote wisely for the candidates that will lead the country in the following years. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FAMILY FUN DAY
Over 70 members of the Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ (4th watch) join a "Family Fun Day" at the Kilili Beach in celebration of the church's family month. The event lasted three hours, concluding with prayers.

Bandila nominee bewails misuse of partylist system

Bishop Nilo S. Tayag, the second nominee of the partylist Bandila, protests the wrong use of the partylist system as envisioned by the 1987 Constitution, which is to advance the welfare of the marginalized sectors of the Philippine society.

"The true intentions and spirit of the constitutional provision on the partylist [system] has been blatantly violated with the emergence of 'partylists' that are clearly for the interests of the ruling elite," Tayag lamented.

He said Filipino voters must carefully study the programs and advocacies of the various partylists that seek their support, looking into the record and qualifications of the nominees, not on their academic and technical preparation but on how they have manifested their concerns for the less fortunate, the poorest of the poor and the marginalized sectors of Philippine society.

At 17, Tayag joined and later became the national chairman of the youth organization Kabataang Makabayan, which led the violent demonstrations and widespread unrest among the youth against then dictator Ferdinand Marcos that later became known as "The First Quarter Storm" in the 1970's

Tayag was imprisoned for 11 years after which he established the Kilusang Pilipinismo, a multisectoral organization that worked for peasants, workers, urban poor or informal settlers, fisherfolk, construction workers and small businessmen.

The non-government group engaged in values formation on the basis of the ideology of Filipinism, which is also the ideology of the Philippine Independent Catholic Church.

Tayag joined this church, studied for the priesthood, and is now its missionary bishop and national program director. Recently, he was given the formal dispensation to run for public office by Obispo Supremo Armando De la Cruz.

"When we established the partylist Bandila, we are just being consistent with our past struggles for the disenfranchised in our society. We shall continue to fight through the genuine partylist system. We will need the unstinting support of the Filipino voters for together we shall win victory," Tayag said. ***(PR)***

OFWs used as drug couriers from Iran to Asian countries—DFA

By CYNTHIA BALANA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday warned overseas Filipino workers against unscrupulous individuals who ask or "contract" them to carry items or baggage from Iran to another city in Asia in exchange for money or leisure trips.

In his report to the DFA, Philippine Ambassador to Tehran Generoso Senga said a growing number of Filipino workers in or transiting from Iran got involved in drug trafficking as mules. He said that Filipino victims were asked to bring a certain item or baggage from Iran to another country, usually Bangkok, Thailand or Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Early this month, two Filipinos were arrested by Iranian authorities for attempting to smuggle illegal drugs into the country.

The victims said they were lured by offers of lucrative salaries in exchange for the seemingly easy task of transporting a package with their baggage. The package, upon inspection by the Iranian customs, contained illegal drugs.

Under Sharia law, drug smuggling is punishable by life imprisonment or death by hanging.

"The public is also advised to be vigilant when offered similar job offers in Iran and to first check the veracity of the job being offered with the Department of Labor and Employment or the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency," the DFA said.

RP court orders arrest of 189 in massacre

By OLIVER TEVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Manila court issued formal arrest warrants Thursday for 189 people suspected in the election-related massacre of 57 people last year, the country's largest murder case since World War II war crime trials.

Most of the suspects are former government-armed militiamen and police loyal to a powerful clan blamed for the slayings. The court also issued commitment orders which directed police to continue detaining seven others, including clan patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr. and several of his sons, who were arrested without formal warrants on suspicion of plotting the Nov. 23 massacre in southern Maguindanao province, state prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera said.

Among those covered by the arrest warrants are 47 police officers who were placed in custody after being suspended by the national police for alleged involvement in the killings, said Francisco Don Montenegro, chief of the national police investigation and detection group.

Arroyo has the numbers to win speakership

PDI survey shows she could get 159 votes

By INQUIRER BUREAUS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Imagine Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo banging the gavel in the House of Representatives, having made history as the first President to seek and win a seat in the chamber.

A close look at many of the races for House seats nationwide will show that this is not as farfetched a scenario, according to Arroyo's allies. (The local campaign starts Friday.)

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, one of her closest allies and himself running for a House seat representing his province, says he believes Arroyo will have the numbers if she wants to become Speaker. (Out of 260 House seats, she will need just a majority, or 135, to be installed as the chamber's leader.)

According to a nationwide count made by the Philippine Daily Inquirer bureaus, Arroyo will have at least 159 votes for Speaker if all her allies seeking House seats are elected.

"I think she's a strong contender," Evardone says. "She has a lot of loyalists who are going to win in the local races for Congress."

Going price is P1-2M

But loyalties will wane if Arroyo is no longer the President, says Lito Banayo, analyst and campaign manager of the former presidential candidate Sen. Francis Escudero.

One way for her to clinch the speakership, he says, is to buy off at least 135 members of the incoming House.

"The going price is just P1 million to P2 million per congressman," Banayo, a member of the anti-Arroyo group called Former Senior Government Officials, says in a phone interview.

Arroyo

But the problem is how long the House members will remain bought. "Even if she pays them P20 million each," Banayo says, Arroyo is not assured of keeping the speakership, especially when the new President starts wielding the power of the pork barrel.

The President and her predecessors, Joseph Estrada and Fidel Ramos, are said to have wielded influence through the pork barrel funds, which both senators and congressmen tap for pet projects and which have become a source of graft.

"It's all transactional," Banayo says.

But Evardone says members of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD coalition have made separate calculations and reached a common conclusion—the numbers are there for an Arroyo speakership.

Northern Luzon

In four regions in northern Luzon, which account for 50 seats in the House, only nine candidates are seen to likely oppose giving the speakership to Arroyo.

She can count on at least 41 votes from congressional candidates with strong chances of winning in the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and Cordillera.

In the Ilocos, which has 12 seats, Arroyo is assured of getting four votes from Ilocos Sur and La Union, a bailiwick of her allies—the Singsons, Ortegas and Dumpits.

The Nacionalista Party (NP) will get two votes in Ilocos Norte with the likely win of former first lady Imelda Marcos in the second congressional district and former Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas, who has reconciled with the Marcoses, in the first district.

The NP has no known candidate for Speaker, but rival parties accuse it of entering into a secret alliance with the President.

In Pangasinan, Arroyo is assured of a vote each from the third and second districts, where reelectionist Rachel Arenas and administration candidate Leopoldo Bataoil are likely to win.

Candidates of the Nationalist People's Coalition in three districts of Pangasinan (Gina de Venecia in the fourth district, Sison Mayor Kimi Cojuangco in the fifth, and Vice Gov. Marlyn Primicias-Agabas in the sixth) may back Arroyo as Speaker.

If former TV reporter Maki Pulido of the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino loses in the race for the first district, Arroyo will get all six votes in Pangasinan.

6.0-magnitude earthquake hits west of Manila

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck west of Manila on Thursday, the seismology institute reported, causing buildings in the Philippine capital to shake and sending frightened workers out of their offices.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, and no tsunami alert was issued. Buildings in Manila shook for about 30 seconds.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology initially reported the tremor had a magnitude of 6.2, but lowered it to 6.0 after receiving more field data, said its director, Renato Solidum.

"Essentially, this would not trigger significant damage," Solidum said.

AP
Employees gather on the side of a street after they rushed out of their office building after an earthquake Thursday, March 25, 2010 in Manila, Philippines.

Editha Vargaz of the Land Bank of Philippine's risk management group said she and dozens of other colleagues climbed down the stairs to the street from the bank's headquarters on the 31st floor of the 34-story building.

"We were very calm," she said, citing training from regular earthquake and fire evacuation drills.

However, there was panic among some employees in offices at the nearby 14-story Ramon Magsaysay Center, said Ralph Balmaceda, who works for a travel agency on the seventh floor.

While he and other staff hurried down the stairs, "most others were panicking and some even tried to shove others" to reach the street more quickly.

"It was scary because of the previous incidents in other countries," said Balmaceda's office mate Beth Rodriguez. "We thought it would be the same here also."

Solidum said the quake was centered off Lubang Island in Mindoro Occidental province, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) southwest of Manila, six miles (10 kilometers) under the seabed.

The U.S. Geological Survey put the magnitude at 6.1 and depth at 21 miles (33 kilometers).

Lubang Island is near the southern end of the Manila Trench, a fault line about 560 miles (900 kilometers) long on the ocean floor under the South China Sea along the western flank of the Philippines' main island of Luzon.

The Philippine archipelago lies in the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire where earthquakes are common. It is flanked by the Pacific Ocean to the east and the South China Sea to the west with undersea trenches—potential quake triggers—running alongside its coast on both sides.

The last major quake registered a magnitude 7.7 in 1990 and killed nearly 2,000 people on the main northern island of Luzon.

A 7.1-magnitude earthquake set off by a local fault near Lubang whipped up a tsunami that killed 78 people on Mindoro in 1994.

55 areas in Eastern Visayas on police election watchlist

TACLOBAN CITY—The Philippine National Police has placed 55 areas in Eastern Visayas on its "election watch list," the PNP regional official said here on Thursday.

Senior Superintendent Manuel Cubillo, PNP Region 8 community relations officer, said 21 of these areas were in Samar, 16 in Northern Samar, eight in Eastern Samar, six in Leyte, three in Biliran, and one in Southern Leyte.

The PNP regional office placed these areas on the election watch list because in light of past election violence that erupted in those places due either to intense political rivalries or the presence of the New People's Army, he explained.

Cubillo declined, however, to identify the specific places characterized as possible flashpoints in Eastern Visayas.

Cubillo said the PNP regional headquarters has prepared contingency measures to avert any breakout of tension or violence in these areas.

He said they would be assigning additional policemen to these localities while the members of the Regional Mobile Group and hundreds of new police graduates would be on standby for deployment to these areas if necessary.

Cubillo also disclosed that 30 policemen from the region who were deployed in Jolo since October last year would be recalled to help ensure the peaceful conduct of the elections in the region.

Meanwhile, the Commission on Elections in the region said that the signing of a peace covenant by candidates from various parts of the region would help ensure peaceful polls.

Last Tuesday, close to 50 candidates from various parts of the region signed a peace covenant witnessed by Comelec Chairman Jose Melo and Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal.

Larrazabal, former Comelec director for Eastern Visayas, said that the successful conduct of the elections in the region would depend on the candidates themselves. ***(Inquirer Visayas)***

'Marked improvement' in First Gentleman's condition—doctor

By MIKO MORELOS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo is "conscious" owing to a marked improvement in his condition, his doctor said Friday.

Doctor Juliet Gopez Cervantes, attending physician of the first gentleman, said the medication Arroyo took since his confinement on Thursday has taken effect and relieved his back pain.

"If you recall, he suffered a severe, persistent back pain, that's why he was confined in the hospital," Cervantes told reporters. "Clinically there is a marked improvement in the level of his back pain, so the pain relievers will just be given on an as-needed basis," she said.

Arroyo

She said that while Arroyo's condition has improved, he was still under close monitoring "as he could still encounter some possible complications of this re-dissection of the thoracic aorta."

She also clarified that Arroyo suffered a "new tear" in the aorta, similar to a tear that was repaired in a delicate operation in April 2007.

Cervantes said the improvement in Arroyo's condition was supported by laboratory tests.

Aside from the easing of the pain on his lower back, Arroyo's blood pressure "has been lowered and is stable," and as such, the patient was slowly being weaned from hypertensive medications, Cervantes said.

"We are now gradually putting him on progressive diet," she added.

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6 Filipino workers die at Sabah water treatment plant

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP)—Six Filipino workers died at a water treatment plant in Malaysia's eastern state of Sabah after they inhaled poisonous gas while cleaning a tank, according to reports Tuesday.

The six, aged between 16 and 30, died in the accident late Sunday after two of the workers entered the tank to do cleaning work and failed to emerge an hour later.

State Fire and Rescue Department chief Khairuddin Drahman said the four other workers went down to search for the pair, and also fell unconscious, according to the New Straits Times newspaper.

Khairuddin said they were believed to have inhaled carbon monoxide fumes, emitted by the generator used in the cleaning work.

Sabah authorities could not immediately be reached by Agence France-Presse.

200 Filipinos in Saudi jails freed—DFA

MANILA, Philippines—Some 200 Filipinos who were imprisoned for petty offenses in Saudi Arabia have been pardoned and repatriated to the Philippines since December last year, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a news release.

"The Philippine embassy in Riyadh and the Philippine consulate general in Jeddah made vigorous representations on behalf of our Filipinos in jail and endorsed and followed up on their appeals for clemency with Saudi authorities," Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban Conejos Jr. said.

Some 200 Filipinos previously in jail have been repatriated to the Philippines since December under a royal clemency granted by Saudi authorities.

On December 11, 2009, The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah issued a royal pardon for petty crime offenders. Half of the 200 pardoned are female, and half are males.

Eleven more pardoned Filipinos were originally scheduled for repatriation to Manila last Monday, but missed their midnight flight as their group, under escort by Saudi police authorities, arrived late at the airport. When they arrived, the plane which they were supposed to board had left.

The Philippine embassy is currently arranging the rebooking for their repatriation at the next available flight.

"The DFA remains focused on looking after the welfare of our OFWs, and will continue to do so," Conejos said. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

FEWER CATCH AP PHOTO/BULLIT MARQUEZ

Fishport workers carry tunas for processing at the General Santos Fish Port Complex Thursday, March 25, 2010 in General Santos city in southern Philippines. The country's once-thriving tuna industry lost about 50 percent of its daily output due to piracy, less investors, and fewer catch after Indonesia closed its fishing waters to Philippine tuna fishermen, according to an official of the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority.

Bermuda cargo ship with Filipino seaman hijacked

By CYNTHIA BALANA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—A Bermuda-flagged cargo ship with a Filipino among its crew members was hijacked Tuesday by pirates 120 miles off the coast of Oman, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported on Wednesday.

Citing a report from the Philippine embassy in Nairobi and quoting a report from the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), the DFA said that MV Talca, with 23 Sri Lankans seafarers, one Filipino and one Syrian, was hijacked even with the presence of around 35 warships from the European Union Naval Force, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States and other nations in the seas.

The hijacking happened about 60 miles from the easternmost limits of the 1.5-million square-mile (3.9 million square kilometer) area patrolled by warships from different nations sent to stop piracy in the region.

Maritime security experts say piracy will continue to be a problem until an effective government is established on Somalia's lawless shores. Somalia has not had a functioning government for 19 years.

The latest hijacking incident brings to five the number of Filipino seafarers, in three vessels, being held captive by pirates in Somalia.

3 seafarers stranded in Greece arrive in RP

By ABIGAIL KWOK
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Three of 12 Filipino seafarers who have been stranded in Greece since July 2009 returned to the country Wednesday and lamented that the Philippine government failed to help them.

"The other stranded seafarers from other countries were able to go home immediately. We were stranded for almost a year," said Primo Fernandico, who along with Jerry Laride and Erolin Chiong, arrived in Manila Wednesday.

The rest of the stranded Filipino seafarers are expected to arrive in Manila within the week.

The Filipinos were working as crew of MV Aeta Sierra, which had been suspected of operating illegally and held for investigation by Greek authorities off the coast of Athens.

Fernandico, who worked as a 2nd cook on MV Aeta Sierra, told INQUIRER.net that compared to other seafarers from other countries, the Filipinos were the least cared for.

For more than eight months, Fernandico said that they were not paid appropriate wages and they lacked adequate food, water, and medicines while on board the ship.

Ellene Sana of the Center for Migrants Advocacy said the seafarers had been seeking assistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs since July.

"They've been asking for assistance in July. The DFA simply had been unresponsive," Sana said.

Fernandico also claimed that the Philippine Embassy in Greece failed to help them. He said that although they were offered plane tickets home, they had to turn it down because they would not be able to get their back wages from their employers.

With the help of a group of Filipino migrant workers in Greece, the seafarers filed a case before a court in Athens against the owners of MV Aeta Sierra.

The court ruled in their favor and ordered the ship owners to pay the seafarers' back wages.

Sana said that on March 10, the 12 seafarers received a partial payment of their back wages.

TAKE CHARGE

Tips for a budget friendly family summer vacation

Question: Summer's here and my kids are already looking forward to out-of-town trips and activities they can do. It used to be that money was not a problem and we would always travel to another country for a short break during the summer. We also always enrolled the kids in summer workshops. But now I have to be realistic and cut down onexpenses due to a slowdown in my business. Any tips on how we can have a great summer but still within budget?—Mario

Answer: Summer is indeed the time to have fun outdoors with the family. The kids are on school break, and both parents and schoolchildren need not worry about homework, waking up early for the school bus, and reviewing for exams and quizzes. It is also nice to go to a place where the air is cooler to take a break from the intense summer heat in the city.

But though budget is a concern, it should not limit you from planning a wonderful summer vacation with the family. There are many things you can do while still on a budget—and you'll have fun while at it.

Below are our tips on how you can have that budget-friendly summer vacation:

1 Figure out how much your budget is. This is a must. To plan out a budget-friendly vacation, you need to know how much your budget is. Ideally, you should have already built up some savings for this summer vacation. Look at your savings, incoming income, and expenses. See how much you can set aside for a summer bonding activity with the family.

2 Ask your family what they want to do. This will help you narrow down your choices as to activities. The kids may like to go swimming or fishing or visit the zoo. Your wife may want to go somewhere you haven't gone to yet.

3 Do your research. Based on the activities they want to do, ask your friends for ideas on where to go. Surf the Internet for places to go to where you can do what your family wants to do. Canvas for prices for accommodations if needed. You might want to consider going to places nearer to your residence to save on travel cost. For instance, for swimming, try the beaches in Batangas, if you live in Metro Manila, instead of Cebu or Palawan. There are also a lot of low-cost air fares being offered now.

4 Consider going with other families together. Make a road trip with close friends and their families. Not only will you get to enjoy bonding together, this will bring down cost too, as you can negotiate for lower hotel rates.

5 Try the un-tourist-y places. People will flock to popular places like Boracay and Baguio. There are other places you can go to where the crowd may not be as thick and where prices are cheaper (for instance, Dumaguete, San Fabian in Pangasinan).

6 Cut down the number of days. Instead of a weekend, how about going on a day trip instead? Some day trips you can schedule are to the Pahiyas Festival in Quezon, to Pampanga for a food trip, to Subic for the zoo or beach, or to Tagaytay for a picnic.

7 Visit family or friends. Take up your cousin's long-standing invitation to visit the province and bring the family along. This will help you save on accommodation cost.

8 Find out what you can do where you are. Look for activities in your area which you can do with your kids over weekends. Maybe there's a pottery workshop you can take part in, or dad/mom-and-me swimming lessons. Have a picnic at a nearby park. Kids would love the idea of doing something new with their parents even if that means staying put in the city.

9 Check out what your credit card offers. You may be entitled to discounts in hotel accommodations in a resort, or tickets to a movie. Look at the website of your credit card company for information, or flyers that come with your bill.

10 Volunteer and help others. One activity that may not cost much but will give your kids a great experience is volunteering. Check out how you can help build homes through Gawad Kalinga or Habitat for Humanity. You get to go outdoors and help other people, too.

11 Ask your children's school for a list of summer classes. Schools may offer summer workshops at a cheaper rate as compared to those offered outside. Some schools offer swimming, taekwondo, art, and creative writing classes.

12 Love anything free. Check out the newspaper for a list of free events in your area, from mall tours of recording artists to free concerts and plays at the park.

13 Have a stay-cation. This means staying at home, but going on vacation mode. Plan for a "camping" weekend—put up a tent in the backyard and grill barbeque outdoors. Have games. Sing campfire songs. Young kids will love this and remember it as it will be different. Or you can stay indoors and have a DVD marathon the whole day, pizza and pasta, and karaoke night.

14 Visit museums. You can spend a day visiting several museums in the city and cap this with a dinner at a family restaurant.

15 Have a family project at home. Organize the family photos and do scrapbooking. Make a music video showing your kids' baby photos. Build a stool or shelf with your son. These things do not cost an arm and a leg yet allow you to have quality time with your family.

As you can see, you can have a fun vacation even without your usual big budget. Just be creative. It's the time together you spend as a family that counts.

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Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Police suspect suicide in Montano son's death

By NANCY C. CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—The death of actor Cesar Montano's son, Christian Angelo Manhilot, who was found early Friday morning with a gunshot wound to the head in his kitchen, could have been a suicide, police said.

"The initial report from the investigators said it was apparently a suicide," said Chief Inspector Benjamin Elenzano, head of the Quezon City Police District homicide unit.

Manhilot, 23, was found by a household help slumped on a chair in the kitchen of his house on Yakal Street, Tivoli Royale Subdivision in Barangay Batasan Hills at around 6 a.m.

He had a gunshot wound on the head.

Montano

Found near the body were a .45-caliber pistol, which police believed to be the gun used in the shooting, a cellular phone, and a landline phone.

Police said Montano was in Bohol when the shooting happened.

Montano is running for governor in the island province and was preparing for the start of the campaign period this Friday for local candidates in the May 10 general elections.

'Missing' Kapuso talent in Canada with beauty queen

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Lara Quigaman and Marco Alcaraz

MANILA, Philippines—For two months now, Kapuso actor Marco Alcaraz has been missing from the TV screen. His last show was "Tinik sa Dibdib" last year.

Since parting ways with manager Arnold Vegafria, Marco has made himself scarce.

Turned out that he's vacationing with his girlfriend, former Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman.

Marco and Lara are finally making their relationship public.

They recently left for Vancouver, Canada, to visit Lara's widowed mother and brother.

Nope, he's not asking for her hand in marriage, he told the Inquirer before he boarded their flight to Canada last week.

But he's pleased because Lara's mom, Precy, approves of their relationship.

He also denies the rumor that they are expecting a baby. "We just laugh it off," he said.

A sporty lifestyle is one thing they share, Lara said. "He makes me laugh, too."

Marco recounted that he brought her once to Camarines Sur to go wakeboarding and she was hooked.

After Vancouver, they will proceed to Los Angeles to watch an NBA game.

"I've always wanted to take her to a game between the LA Lakers and Utah Jazz," he said.

The North American holiday is their third trip abroad, after Hong Kong and Dubai.

When they return to Manila, Lara will wrap up work in the Cinemabuhay drama "Slow Fade," while Marco will go job-hunting with a new manager.

As for the detractors who have been spreading intrigues about them, Marco has this to say: "Why can't they just be happy that we're happy?"

'Bagets'-looking Aga a 'lolo' in 2 months

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Birthday girl Karylle almost had a "wardrobe malfunction" during her duet with Arnel Pineda at the "ASAP" summer special in Boracay. "I was so excited to sing with Arnel for the first time," she explained, "so I moved too much. Good thing I wore a cover-up over my bathing suit, so walang indecent exposure (laughs)."

Did she and Arnel get to talk about their common experience of singing the National Anthem at Pacquiao's match? "Nope but we got to bond," she said. "He sang for me and my friends while the sun was setting. Eksakto his song was about sunsets."

■ ■ ■

Lotlot de Leon is ecstatic that her mom, Nora Aunor, has been named Best Asian Actress of the Decade by the Green Globe International Film Awards.

"Sobrang proud daughter ako na my mom's talent is recognized, not just locally, but also abroad. Ka-level na niya ang Hollywood greats. Filipino pride 'yan! Even my daughter na Grade 2, pinagmamalaki niya sa classmates niya kasi Mom is in their Filipino textbook."

Lot would rather not comment about reports that La Aunor was a no-show in her Canada concert because she wasn't feeling well. Hopefully, the prestigious award will serve as an adrenaline shot for the Superstar to get her act together.

After her cosmetic surgery in Japan, Ate Guy's new "face" should usher in a new phase in her career, and a new attitude.

■ ■ ■

Ruffa Gutierrez and her adorable kids, Lorin and Venice, enjoyed Sunday bonding with Aga and Charlene Muhlach and their cute twins, Andres and Atasha, at the Muhlachs' Batangas resthouse.

I teased Ruffa. "What if Andres courts one of your daughters so they will continue your thwarted romance with Aga?" The hot mama replied, laughing: "The twins are 8. Lorin is 6 and Venice is 5. They still have a long way to go. They became honorary cousins over the weekend. For now yun na lang muna at playmates sila."

The prospective childhood sweethearts are bound to be show biz's future darlings.

Speaking of Aga, his first grandson is due barely two months from now. Igi Boy and his wife Patricia will name their firstborn Alejandro Miguel. That's in keeping with the Muhlach tradition of having names that begin with the letter "A." Ever bagets-looking Aga will never look like a lolo at all.

■ ■ ■

Derek Ramsey is handling the controversy hounding him and Angelica Panganiban properly. It goes to show how well-bred he is.

The issue erupted when their private pic taken on an island landed on the front page of a tabloid. Instead of evading the issue, flaring up or denying it, Derek owned up to it, saying there's nothing wrong about going away on a trip together, since he and Angelica are in a relationship.

But he said that shot was not meant for public consumption. Ahh! To be proudly in love. If you feel it, flaunt it!

'Siomai' vendor, new Net sensation

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—ABS-CBN'S "Pilipinas Got Talent" has created a new Internet sensation in the person of Jovit Baldivino, 16, a high school student from Marilag, Batangas, who sells siomai at the town plaza after classes to help his poor family.

His audition video, uploaded on YouTube, has registered 2.2 million hits as of Monday (1.6 million on Sunday—and counting). Journey's "Faithfully" has found another voice! Was Arnel Pineda watching?

Yes, as a matter of fact, Jovit dreams of singing a duet with Arnel. This doesn't seem like a long shot at all. Interviewed on "TV Patrol World," Journey's Pinoy front man said of his young sound-alike: "He has a really strong potential to become a rock singer. When I was 16, I didn't sound as good as he does now."

No way to treat an icon

Veteran Actress, considered a cinema icon, was slighted by the unprofessional behavior of Controversial Actress.

CA kept bothering VA to take part in a project. Reluctantly, VA agreed. For days, VA waited for CA's call—only to learn that their meeting had been canceled. Inexplicably, CA remained persistent, but VA was so upset, she refused to believe CA's profuse apologies.

Making their presence felt

In earlier times, the entire clan would've been chased out of town.

After a series of scandals rocked their family, Controversial Star continued to be seen in public—seemingly undaunted by the intrigues. Perhaps CS was trying to save face by keeping herself in the limelight. Her equally Scandalous Relatives remained visible, too.

Senior Star noticed that SR1 seemed jumpy in a show biz gathering—as if on pins and needles. "SR1 looked worried about what other people are saying behind her back."

SR2 seemed a bit too jovial at a recent party, singing and dancing without a care. "In denial," quipped an observer.

RUSHES SPECIAL

Character actors in love triangle

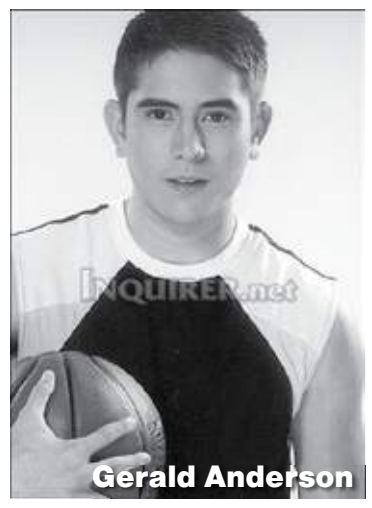
© 2010, Philippine Daily Inquirer

MANILA, Philippines—A dramatic confrontation that could put telenovelas to shame occurred on the set of an indie film a few years back.

Character Actress 1 stormed into the set to confront Character Actress 2, whom CA1 suspected of sleeping with her husband, Veteran Actor.

CA1 used language that could rattle lesser mortals, but CA2 was unruffled, casually denying the affair, thus: "Oh, it's nothing."

Fast forward to the here and now: CA1 and VA are trying to save their marriage, while CA2 has given up on a relationship with Showbiz Insider, who swings both ways. Aww!



Other people's money

A disturbing rumor in the biz says Film Insider ran away with money raised by colleagues and friends for a worthy project.

A criminal case has supposedly been filed against FI. But everyone involved has been mum on the issue. So far.

Empress shocked

Empress Shuck, who became a talent of manager Becky Aguila at age 5, was deeply saddened by the breakup of Aguila's management company and its top talent, Angel Locsin.

"They were very close," Empress told the Inquirer during a recent media gathering. "I hope they will remain friends."

Empress said the split taught her one thing: "You can't predict the future. Right now, Tita Becky and I are okay. I hope to work with her for as long as possible."

Practical Ai Ai

"I'm very practical. I grab every opportunity to earn as long as I don't hurt anyone or break any deals," said comedian Ai Ai de las Alas, who was reportedly wooed by TV5 to transfer from ABS-CBN. Her Kapamilya contract ended in February.

"Ang sa akin, work lang nang work," Ai Ai told us. "Times are hard, aarte pa ba naman ako?"

A source close to the comedienne confirmed that TV5 "has expressed interest" in Ai Ai. Another source said ABS-CBN has just drafted a new contract for the comedienne that will end in 2012. Part of this new deal is the program "Pilipinas Got Talent," a sitcom opposite Aga Muhlach, and a drama series, the source added.

Gifts from Kim

For his 21st birthday last March 7, Gerald Anderson got an expensive golf cart and a Louis Vuitton bag as presents from on-screen partner Kim Chiu.

"I told Kim I wouldn't use the LV bag so it would remain new. Sobrang ganda kasi. But I can't wait to use the golf cart," Gerald told writers during the launch of Payless Pancit Shanghai, which he endorses with Kim.

Gerald said Kim also organized a party in his home. "She set-up a karaoke, a photo boot and a buffet—like a kiddie party."

Maharlika – Opinyon

Class war

In the last week of January, surveys put the undecided voters at between 2 percent (Social Weather Stations), 5 percent (Manila Standard) and 6 percent (Pulse Asia). There are 50,723,734 registered voters for the May elections. The Commission on Elections expect an 80 percent turnout, or 40.5 million.

Historically Philippine national elections attract a relatively high participation rate of between 70 and 80 percent, compared to that of stable and older Western democracies, at a rate less than 60 percent. From this view, a high level of electoral election participation is an erroneous test of the stability of pluralist democracies that hold regular elections as an instrument of social and political renewal.

The above figures are being used by this paper to focus on, and illustrate, the issue that the portion of undecided voters indicates the social battleground on which the leading presidential candidates (notably Senators Benigno Aquino III and Manuel Villar) would fight to win over the undecided in the next months.

Classified according to income classes, 10 percent of the 40.5 million voters, belong to ABC classes, (the rich and upper middle class, the intelligentsia); 75 percent to the D class (lower middle class and the poor; and 15 percent to Class E, the poorest). The strategy of the leading contenders, especially Aquino and Villar, who were in a dead heat in the Pulse Asia survey, with 37 percent of respondents voting for Aquino and 35 percent for Villar, has been determined by what socioeconomic classes they were targeting in their campaigns. The two percentage points separating them pinpoints the area where they would be fighting tooth and nail, for at stake in this competition is 811,000 votes, representing the number of votes involved in the 2 percent lead of Aquino over Villar.

This indicates how closely fought the election race has become. The 811,000 votes are not a pittance. This explains why Aquino has drastically changed his campaign style and has become more aggressive and combative, to put Villar on the defensive. He is fighting to stop Villar from wiping his precariously narrow margin.

In the survey, Aquino led Villar 37-22 in the ABC Class and 40-34 in Class D, while Villar led 39-31 in Class D, which makes up 75 percent of the 40.5 million voters. These class statistics help explain why Villar has been flooding mass media, especially TV, with political ads addressed to the popular noon time TV shows—like "Eat Bulaga" and "Wowowee"—patronized by the poor. This is the class war that is taking place, in the homes of the poor.

Last Wednesday, Villar invaded the bastion of the Makati big business establishments, when he appeared at the Makati Business Club election forum to inform them of his policy platform, which has remained hazy up to this time. He knew he was in hostile territory, but he also needs them although businessmen have fewer votes than the masa of Class E. He has learned from Joseph Estrada that the MBC was one of the strategic groups, including the army and the Catholic Church hierarchy, that withdrew support from him in Edsa 2 in 2001.

Though a billionaire, Villar is a nouveau riche and is not comfortable in the company of the old-money families dominating the MBC. He said he was happy to appear at the club "because I know I am not popular with the MBC, but I wanted to come here so that they will hear my views and see what I plan to do for our country. The business sector is important in … alleviating poverty." He pitched this pro-poor line in an effort to disarm the MBC members.

Analysis

By AMANDO DORONILA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A survey conducted from Dec. 8 to 18 in 2009, among 800 members, revealed that 61 percent would vote for Aquino. Villar received only 7 percent, lower than former Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro's 14 percent.

He said, "Given my background, my humble beginnings… I think it would be useful not to dwell on what makes us so different, but to point out what we have in common." He likened the election of a president to the selection of a business chief executive officer, who is a "true leader," taking into consideration the interests of all the company's stakeholders. "Our country has too many complex problems and too many competing interests it will need a strong leader with a proven track record to even have a chance." This was a swipe at Aquino, who has been criticized for lack of executive experience.

He promised a "strong and honest government," if elected.

When Villar was asked about the C-5 road extension project, some observers said he answered the question "reasonably well," but some said he failed to explain why and how he got embroiled in the controversy.

Villar also said he could not promise not to impose new taxes, unlike Aquino who told the MBC last month that he would not impose new taxes or increase tax rates if elected president. MBC executive director Alberto Lim said Villar made an "excellent delivery" of his platform, but gave "superficial treatment" to difficult issues.

"He was very impressive, but I don't think he changed people's mind," Lim said.

Peter Wallace, publisher of a business publication, had a different opinion. "I think there may be a significant shift in the MBC's mindset," he said, "as well as a shift in the thinking of the individual members after his presentation today."

The MBC will conduct another survey before the election. "We'll see if there have been changes since our last survey in December," Lim said.

EDITORIAL

Lighter than air

Helium is often described as the lightest among inert gases, which is why it is commonly used to make balloons. So when Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales dismissed a key argument of the nine Supreme Court justices who voted to allow President Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint the next chief justice as having "the weight of helium," she meant it was lighter than air. Which is about the same measure of respect some constitutionalists, lawyers and critics now give the Court or, more precisely, the majority of faithful Arroyo loyalists who sit in it.

The Constitution says: "Two months immediately before the next presidential election up to the end of his term, a President or Acting President shall not make appointments, except temporary appointments to executive positions when continued vacancies therein will prejudice public service or endanger public safety." The rule couldn't be clearer: No appointments two months before the election. The exception is just as unmistakable: temporary appointments can be made to executive positions that are deemed vital for public service and safety. There is no mention whatsoever about appointments to the Judiciary being exempt from the ban, and indeed the Court itself upheld the ban on appointments to the Judiciary in an earlier ruling.

So where did the majority of nine justices find any ambiguity that needed their collective wisdom to clarify? Right where the provision is written. Because the prohibition is found in the article on the Executive Department, they said, that means it covers only appointments to that branch of government, not the Judiciary. But even here they couldn't agree, with some saying the entire Judiciary is exempt and others believing it is only the Supreme Court.

Carpio-Morales, the lone member of the Court who cast a dissenting vote, sharply disputed the majority opinion. Where the provision is placed, she said, is nothing more than "trivialities of draftsmanship style" that should be given "very little weight…the weight of helium."

Christian Monsod, a member of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the present Constitution, said that by authorizing the President to make appointments to the Judiciary, the Court "added an exemption where there was none." "There is no ambiguity in the Constitution," he said. "The ambiguity is in the mind of those justices."

There is no ambiguity either in the public mind about the character of the present Court. Packed with grateful appointees, it is a Court that is willing to go through all kinds of mental calisthenics to prove their loyalty to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

At the very least, Ms Arroyo can now leave Malacañang without fear that she or the members of her family might be headed for jail any time in the foreseeable future. With her favorites now occupying key positions in the military and the police and with her Court appointees signaling their readiness to do her bidding, who would stop her from ruling in a holdover capacity after a manufactured failure of election? Who is to prevent her from declaring martial law?

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Love in the age before Viagra

"Love in the Time Of Cholera" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is on a long list of books that I have to read before I die. I have been told, by no less than Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, that this long and complicated novel is worth the trouble, but then I often browse or read in bits and pieces these days in search of topics to fill this column space.

Since Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year came on the same day in 2010, I thought of doing a column on the various amulets and love potions for sale in the makeshift stalls outside Quiapo church. I have seen the reused "lapad" bottles filled with strange and obviously inedible liquids marked crudely with paper labels that scream "Pampalaki" (Enlarger) or "Pamparegla" (Menstruation inducer). There are leaves, roots, herbs, crystals galore, and stones of various colors that make one irresistible to the opposite sex if mixed and administered correctly. (I should remind Danton Remoto that Ladlad should campaign for love potions for those attracted to the same sex.)

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Among the many fascinating anting-anting available, the one that literally stands out from those brass plaques inscribed with Latin mumbo-jumbo is an image of the Christ-Child, the Santo Niño, depicted in all its naked glory. This brass image has the iconographic attributes, rays or "potencies" radiating from its head. On the left hand the Santo Niño carries an orb while the right hand is raised in blessing. What makes this different from the rest is that the Infant is shown with an erect penis. I have not seen it yet but I have been told that you can buy this in various sizes (its member also comes in various sizes with some models having bigger, forgive the pun, screw-on member). This amulet, which is supposed to make men irresistible to women, has been around longer than Viagra.

To get some background on this, I turned to the late Fr. Francisco Demeterio's four-volume "Dictionary of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs" (Cagayan de Oro: Xavier University, 1970). It has no entry on the naked Santo Niño from Quiapo, but it contains a whole section on "lumay" or love charms that the loveless on Valentine's Day 2010 can try out with the same hope that one brings to a lotto outlet.

First, there is the "Angelito" or "little angel" that is taken from the corpse of a female infant. Unfortunately, there are no instructions on how to go about acquiring this amulet, it just says that it is difficult to get but promises any man who has it the attention of all the beautiful maidens in the neighborhood. So strong is this "angelito" (actually it should be known by its feminine form "angelita") that maidens will make advances on the bearer.

Another amulet, made from the ashes from a spotless black cat, is said to make the bearer invisible and attractive to the opposite sex. Another option is to abstain from bathing for a whole week, with no part of the body being washed, not even the face. The accumulated grease and grime (libag) is then rubbed off and placed in a bottle, and then mixed with tuba or chocolate for the girl to drink unknowingly. This will make her more responsive to the man.

More difficult to do for a man is to tie a butterfly to a woman's hair. If accomplished, the woman will go crazy over him. Another method, which is almost impossible to do in urban areas today, is to watch the night sky in search of a falling star. When a man sees one, he should take a pebble from the ground and place it in his mouth. This will make him lucky in love, or perhaps turn him into Darna.

You can also look for a star or the new moon. When you see this, it is a favorable time for courtship.

If you don't like making love amulets at night, there is one that can be made in the daytime. Face the sunrise and do not close your eyes. When the intensity of the sunlight increases, you will begin to shed tears. Harvest three teardrops on a tobacco leaf and close your eyes before you go blind. Then roll the tobacco and smoke it near the object of your affection. One sniff and he is all yours.

Holy Week is just around the corner (Ash Wednesday comes next week). Bring a handkerchief with you to church on Good Friday. Immerse it in Holy Water and that will make you attractive to the opposite sex.

If you are brave enough to do so, go around at night on Good Friday in search of a special banana species whose heart opens and drops a hard stone that you must swallow. In other variations of this banana amulet story you must grapple with a demon before swallowing the amulet.

There is one thing the sponsor of a newly baptized girl can do for his godchild. He should run to the door after the ceremony so that she will have many suitors.

Finally there is the belief that you can see the face of your future spouse by standing before a mirror in a dark room at midnight holding a lighted candle. The face of the beloved will appear behind your reflection. This can be done on Valentine's Day, but you have to wear black instead of red to make this work. The terrifying part of this process, as immortalized in Nick Joaquin's classic short story, "May Day Eve," is that sometimes the devil appears instead of the beloved.

Oh, how innocent they were in the age before Viagra.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Samu't Sari

HOUSE DEBATE

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Members of the public listen to testimonies during the House of Representatives' debate on the austerity bill Thursday afternoon. After over four hours of debate, House lawmaker passed House Bill 17-45 on an 11-8 vote. The bill will reportedly cut government cost by over $4.55 million for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2010. Critics of the measure argue, though, that the bill is flawed and will punish the poor.

CULTURAL DAY

Over a thousand students, spectators, and parents joined Hopwood Junior High School in celebrating the cultural diversity of its campus yesterday. The event featured a colorful parade of costumes, booths with creative traditional décor, food sales, a "Jail House" built by the student council, and traditional performances. This year's theme, "A Collage of Culture," was chosen among the several entries in the school's poster-making contest.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

STEM FAIR COMMITTEE

Members of the 2010 CNMI Wide STEM Fair committee pose after the successful event last Saturday at Marianas High School gymnasium. The competition drew over a hundred entries from private and public schools that competed for the overall titles. Five science projects were named overall winners and will compete in the science fair competition in Guam in May.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy advance birthday Tarsila Kaipat "Chilang" who is celebrating her special day on Sunday, March 28, 2010. Have a wonderful day and we love you! Greetings come from, your sisters and family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Youngstyle

VAMPIRES OUTLAST OTHER POP CULTURE TRENDS

By EMILIE LE BEAU
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Imagine having a severe allergy to the sun, a liquid-only diet, and the inability to look at yourself in the mirror.

These problems are commonly shared by vampires, a long-time fiction favorite. Vampires are troubled but fascinating creatures. These nocturnal beings have entertained readers for centuries and film fans for almost 90 years. What makes vampires so immortal with fiction fans?

"The question is why wouldn't they be? There are so many appealing things about the mythology and cultural presence," said Robert Thompson, director of Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture at Syracuse University in New York.

Vampire mythology gives these creatures super powers that many kids wish they could possess. Vampires live forever and often have the ability to read minds, fly, or shape shift.

"This is especially appealing to kids who often feel powerless," Thompson said. "It's a very attractive fantasy because kids are often the opposite of super heroes."

Vampires were the subject of European poetry and short stories for centuries. The first English vampire story "The Vampyre" was published in 1819 by John Polidori. The fascination was renewed in the late 1800s with stories such as "Dracula" by Bram Stoker, published in 1897.

MCT
The Count helped many children learn their numbers on "Sesame Street."

As the movie industry developed, so did the image of the vampire as a mysterious creature. In 1931, the movie "Dracula" starring actor Bela Lugosi portrayed vampires as sophisticated and European.

The 1931 movie version was released before Hollywood began censoring itself with the Hays code. The movie portrays Dracula as daring and sexual. This seals the image of the vampire for decades, said William Patrick Day, professor of English and cinema at Oberlin College and author of "Vampire legends in contemporary American culture: What becomes a legend most" (2002, University of Kentucky press).

Vampires in film became sensual, exotic creatures who wore dark capes and spoke with accents. This changed and vampires are now portrayed as regular people. "They've been updated to contemporary society," Thompson said. "It's the vampire next door."

The vampire next door is having a big cultural moment with popular TV series such as "True Blood" and "The Vampire Diaries." The Twilight Saga continues to produce popular books and movies.

Werewolves also continue to appeal to fans. Werewolf stories can be traced back to Greek mythology and many cultures have their own version of the terrorizing beast. In the US, werewolves became film stars starting in 1935 with "Werewolf of London."

The idea of teens as werewolves started in the 1957 with "I was a Teenage Werewolf." In 1985, "Teen Wolf" turned the concept of werewolves into a romantic comedy.

The fascination continues and the movie "The Wolfman" released in 2010. The Twilight saga includes a pack of handsome young men who turn into werewolves to fight. And Harry Potter fans can expect to see the return of Remus Lupin, the werewolf professor when the final installment releases in two parts in 2010 and 2011.

Werewolves share similar attractive characteristics with vampires.... and teenagers. All three groups sometimes feel like an outsider, Thompson said.

"They are people who are considered stigmatized, not part of the main stream. What teenager at some point doesn't feel that?" Thompson said.

Werewolves are also overcome with anger and emotions which may cause a transformation in some storylines. Teenagers dealing with complex emotions can relate. "Werewolves get into situations where their passions are aroused and they turn into someone they don't want to be," Thompson said.

The fascination with vampires and werewolves is likely to continue. Storylines with these creatures may subside or take a break from seriousness. "The way vampires can change and have a parodist and humorous story keeps it moving," Day said. "It allows it to renew itself."

HALL OF FAME

Some vampires are easily forgotten while others leave their mark on popular culture. Here is a Vampire Hall of Fame spanning centuries:

Angel: A vampire ally in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," Angel has a human soul and becomes Buffy's boyfriend. The conflicted vampire stars in a spinoff from 1999-2004.

Count Chocula: The mascot of General Mill's frosted chocolate cereal since March 1971. He's had a few make-overs over the years including a new box design and reduced sugar recipe.

Count Dracula: Written by Bram Stoker in 1897, the Dracula character has starred in many movies including a 1992 film adaption of the novel.

Count Von Count: This purple puppet has helped children learn how to count since the 1972.

Ah-ah-ah!

Edward Cullen: A dashing vampire from the Twilight saga. More than 100 years old, Edward has the body of a 17-year-old.

Lestat de Lioncourt: A French vampire from the eighteenth century, Lestat is the star in The Vampire Chronicles series by Anne Rice. Tom Cruise played Lestat in the 1994 film "Interview with a Vampire."

Nosferatu: This 1922 German film featured the creepy Count Orlok, a demented vampire with extra long fingers. The movie was released in the US in 1929 and is still available through Netflix.

Wooly mammoth's remains help bring museum exhibit to life

By WILLIAM MULLEN
(C) 2010, CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

Museum exhibits displaying remains of long-extinct creatures don't usually carry much of an emotional wallop, but a new temporary wooly mammoth and mastodon exhibit at the Field Museum in Chicago has at its core a pretty sad story.

The exhibit features one of the more celebrated paleontological specimens to have been discovered in recent years, the almost perfectly intact remains of a baby wooly mammoth that fell into a frigid Siberian mud hole and suffocated 42,000 years ago.

She was named Lyuba, the Russian word for "love," by the reindeer herders who found her carcass washed out of the frozen muck along a Siberian river three years ago.

The Field Museum has brought Lyuba's remains to the U.S. for the first time from the Russian museum where she normally resides.

Just 45 inches long and 110 pounds, Lyuba's remains are so beautifully preserved that she almost looks alive, seeming to give life to the skeletons and magnificent, life-like replicas of dozens of giant Ice Age mammals she might have seen in her time—mammoths, mastodons, 12-foot tall bears, saber-tooth tigers.

Much of the exhibit is devoted to examining the Pleistocene Epoch, when ice sheets covered much of North America and Eurasia when those animals roamed much of the Earth before all of them mysteriously went extinct roughly 10,000 years ago. The exhibit also makes liberal use of specially created, remarkably life-like computer video animations, some projected on immense screens, showing the animals roaming Pleistocene wildernesses.

Lyuba died a gruesome death, but because she sank quickly into muck that became a part of the Siberian permafrost, her remains were preserved for modern science. Because so much of her is intact, she has helped immensely in piecing together what the Ice Age world was like, said Daniel Fisher, a University of Michigan paleontologist who studies wooly mammoth and mastodon tusks, reading them like tree rings for the climatological history of their times.

MCT
Lyuba, the best-preserved baby Mastodon in the world, is featured in a preview of the Field Museum's exhibit, Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age, in Chicago.

"We are gathering information on the behavior, environment and aspects of the physiology and anatomy of these magnificent animals, helping us to understand what caused their extinction," said Fisher, who curated the exhibit.

"Their disappearance is a huge question. In North America, about three fourths of the continent's megafauna—mammoths and mastodons, saber-toothed tigers, giant ground sloths and beaver, camels and horses—all disappeared."

There are four main theories about what led to the mass extinctions of the big mammals, including climate change, disease and asteroid strikes, but the main culprit suggested in the exhibit seems to be the rise in human population. Humans by then were perfecting hunting technique and technology so well that they may have hunted the animals to extinction.

The exhibit also looks back at the 53-million-year-old lineage of Proboscideans, the group of animals that wooly mammoths, mastodons and modern elephants arose from. Starting with a strange looking 35-million-year-old beast called a Moertherim that wandered North America 35 million years ago looking more like a giant tapir, the exhibit shows off a rogues gallery of bizarre early elephant cousins, sporting all sorts of buck teeth and early versions of trunks.

"Most of these life-like models are hands-on, where we want visitors to come up and touch them and give them a sense of the immense scale of these creatures," said Tom Skwerski, a Field exhibit project manager.

"They are sculpted from a resin because they will be traveling with the exhibit for four years and needed to be durable but touchable, so that people can interact with them and see them in exquisite detail. We have one of these full scale reproductions in each gallery of the exhibit, putting some sense of 'wow' into each one of them."

Tickets for the exhibit, which includes regular admission to the museum, will be $23 for adults, $20 for seniors and students and $13 for children 3 through 11 years old. The exhibit, titled "Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age," runs through Sept. 6.

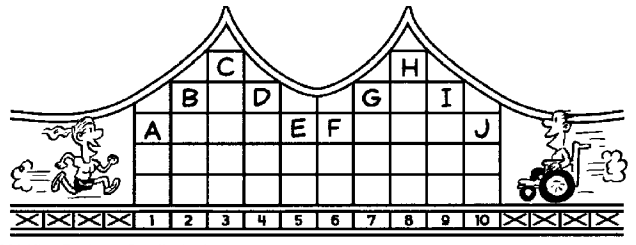
THE WORD ON THE SPOOKY GUY'S CARD means to EXIST. If you read this word backward it means WICKED. What word is on the card?

Answer: LIVE.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

A WORD BRIDGE



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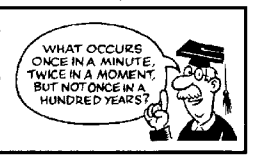
Illustrated by David Coulson

The bridge above contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word, plus plenty of hints.

1. A high mountain.
2. A group of quail.
3. To hit and bounce off.
4. A stunned condition.
5. A specific period of history.
6. To be in good health.
7. The way a horse walks.
8. A safe place.
9. A type of flower.
10. A wide-mouth vessel.

Answers: 1. Alp. 2. Bevy. 3. Carom. 4. Daze. 5. Era. 6. Fit. 7. Gait. 8. Haven. 9. Iris. 10. Jar.

LISTEN UP, STUDENTS! Professor Flunkum is concluding his "Puzzles Old and New" course with a classic riddle. You have until the bell rings to come up with the right answer



Answer: The letter "M."

IT'S MAGIC! Use the numbers 2 through 17 to fill in this Magic Number Square. The numbers in each horizontal row and vertical column should total 38. We've filled in the four center squares. The rest is up to you. Use trial and error – and a good eraser!

	3	8	
	17	10	

[38]

Our answer: First row: 9, 12, 15, 2. Second row: 14, 3, 8, 13. Third row: 4, 17, 10, 7. Fourth row: 11, 6, 5, 16.

Easter baskets and pets don't mix

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Can you remind your readers that chocolate is an absolute no-no for pets? I was at a friend's house and saw that the Easter baskets the kids had unwrapped were sitting out on the kitchen table, candies strewn everywhere. Their curious terrier, "Rascal," kept sneaking onto a chair to sniff around the goodies. I was so worried for him, afraid he would eat the chocolate eggs or ingest the foil wrappers. Please tell your readers to put away the candy in a place that's hard for pets to reach.—Leah H., Philadelphia

DEAR LEAH: You said it best, and I thank you! In the excitement of a holiday, it's easy to leave a lot of things lying around where pets can get at them, including chocolate and other dangerous items.

But pets are an important responsibility. Chocolate is poisonous to dogs, and dogs also risk ingesting other dangerous things—like plastic Easter eggs that break into shards when chewed. Cats may chew on items that interest them, like the rustling "grass" that lines baskets.

Be sure to pick up wrapping paper, tinsel or plastic grass, and fallen candies right away. Better yet, put pets in a separate area while the unwrapping is going on, and let them in after everything is cleaned up.

If, after a celebration, your pet seems lethargic, won't eat, displays any sign of pain or distress, or is vomiting, take it to the veterinarian right away.

■ ■ ■

Send your pet questions to Sam Mazzotta at ask@pawscorner.com, or write to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Find more pet resources at www.PawsCorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was Benjamin Disraeli, 19th-century British Prime Minister and the first Earl of Beaconsfield, who made the following sage observation: "The most dangerous strategy is to jump a chasm in two leaps."

■ You've probably never heard of Hurley, Wisc., but if you lived in the area, you'd know that the town is home to a 15-foot-tall corkscrew. It can be found, appropriately enough, outside Corkscrew Liquors.

■ Except for the queens, all wasps die in the autumn.

■ The Japanese ruling family is the oldest continuing hereditary monarchy in the world. The current emperor, Akihito, is the 125th holder of the title. Interestingly, he's also a marine biologist and has published papers on ichthyology in both English and Japanese scholarly journals.

■ For reasons that aren't quite clear, in Sweden, it's illegal to train a seal to balance a ball on the tip of its nose.

■ It was March 15, 1952, when the largest amount of rainfall in a single 24-hour period was recorded. It was the island of Reunion, in the Indian Ocean, that had the misfortune to receive a whopping 73.62 inches of rain on that Ides of March. That's more than 6 feet of rain in a single day!

■ Feel like you have a lot more stuff than you used to? You're not imagining things—and you're not the only one. According to the Self-Storage Association, the number of businesses offering on-premises storage of all those things you can't find room for at home has increased nearly 10 times since 1964.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "I no longer worry about being a brilliant conversationalist. I simply try to be a good listener. I notice that people who do that are usually welcome wherever they go."—Frank Bettger

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MAGIC MAZE ● COMING AND GOING

C	V	S	Q	N	K	H	E	B	Y	W	T	R	O	L
J	G	E	B	Y	W	U	R	P	N	N	K	P	I	F
G	D	B	Z	X	V	S	Q	O	M	I	U	K	I	F
G	E	C	A	Y	E	W	K	T	A	N	G	R	U	O
S	Q	P	N	Y	V	R	I	P	R	L	J	E	H	E
F	E	C	A	Y	A	X	X	U	R	A	V	T	B	L
U	S	Q	P	B	E	W	T	L	I	E	P	N	N	F
M	K	J	M	H	L	R	A	L	V	F	E	E	C	F
B	Z	E	Y	X	A	F	F	O	E	K	A	T	D	U
V	U	T	R	T	N	Q	M	U	G	P	O	M	L	H
K	I	H	S	G	D	E	D	T	P	U	W	O	H	S

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Arrive	Exit	Move	Start
Begin	Go away	Pull out	Take off
Depart	Land	Show up	Turn up
Enter	Leave	Shuffle off	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	–		x		21
x		x		÷	
	+		x		14
–		+		x	
	÷		+		4
21		25		21	

1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 9

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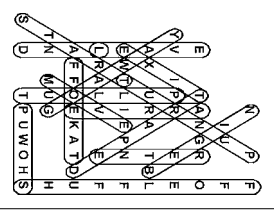
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



COMING AND GOING

GO FIGURE ANSWER

	21		25		21
4	3	+	9	÷	9
	x		+		–
14	1	x	8	+	6
	÷		x		x
21	7	x	2	–	5

Create mosaic art using eggshells

The day after Easter, like the days following many anticipated holidays or celebrations, feels anticlimactic. You might spot a lone jellybean the kids passed by during their frenzied Easter-egg hunt Sunday morning. The shredded paper grass from their Easter baskets reappears in nooks and crannies all over the house, and then there are those decorated hard-boiled eggs in the refrigerator still waiting to be eaten. If "Easter egg salad" sandwiches are on your menu this week, save the colorful shells for a craft your older school-age kids will enjoy.

Here's how to make beautiful mosaic art from dyed eggshells:

On a newspaper-covered table, sort eggshells by color. Place in zipper-style plastic bags and let your kids smash the shells lightly with their fists. Remove from bags and set in piles. Also, mix some white household glue with a few drops of water in a small bowl.

Simple collage

On a piece of heavy construction paper, paint a design with a brush dipped in the glue mixture. Sprinkle the shells on the glue design and press lightly. Your kids may want to add other art materials to the project, such as cutout felt, feathers, uncooked macaroni, sequins and glitter. If you have been on a spring nature walk, add collected small, lightweight "finds," such as tiny, smooth pebbles, pieces of twigs or pods. Add more glue solution when needed. Set the picture aside to dry before displaying.

Colorful picture

Draw a picture with a marker or pencil on a piece of cardboard. The plain side of cardboard from an empty cereal box is perfect. You may want to draw a fish, a bird, geometric shape or a team logo. Glue dark yarn around the outline of the drawing, if you wish. Let dry.

Brush glue in the empty spaces. Press bits of colored eggshells, one at a time, on the glue to fill in the spaces. You also might want to add lentils, seeds or small dry beans in different colors. If the drawing is large, your child may wish to work on it in stages and come back to a different section at a later time.

Set the completed mosaic aside to dry before displaying on a plate rack.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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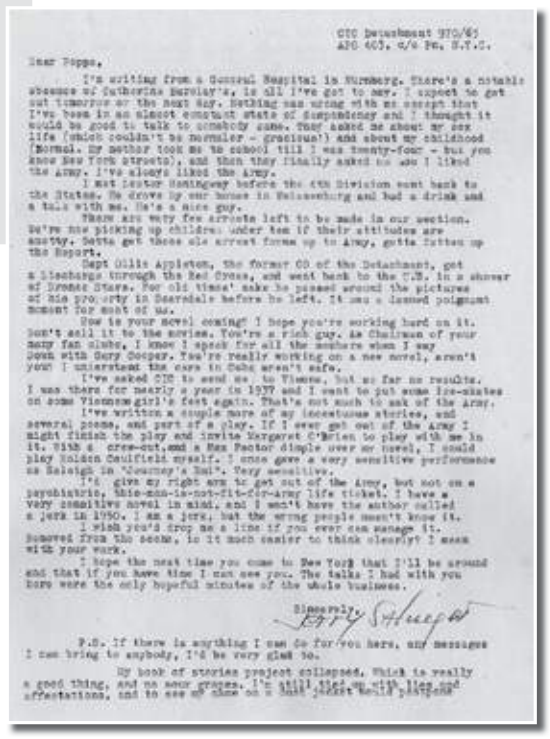
Life & Style

JFK Library to show Salinger letter to Hemingway

BOSTON (AP)—It was the summer of 1946 when a young and war-fatigued J.D. Salinger reached out to another writer whose career had also been shaped by war, a writer he had arranged to meet while both had been in Europe.

"The talks I had with you here were the only hopeful minutes of the whole business," Salinger writes at the close of his letter to Ernest Hemingway, which will be displayed publicly for the first time on Sunday at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston.

The letter, which has been available to and referenced by scholars over the years, is part of the Ernest Hemingway collection that has been kept at the JFK Library for 30 years. It offers a fascinating glimpse of a sardonic Salinger, then serving in the Army, in the period before the 1951 publication of "Catcher in the Rye."



AP

This photograph provided by the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, shows a letter sent by a young J.D. Salinger to Ernest Hemingway in 1946 which will be put on public display for the first time at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston on Sunday, March 28, 2010.

The author even jokingly compares himself with Catcher in the Rye protagonist Holden Caulfield, who had appeared as a character in earlier short stories.

Salinger died Jan. 27 at age 91 at his home in New Hampshire. JFK Library director Thomas Putnam said renewed interest in the reclusive author was one reason why the library decided to display the letter during a presentation of the PEN/Hemingway Award, given annually to a first-time fiction writer.

Salinger addresses the letter "Dear Poppa," a Hemingway nickname, signaling a friendship possibly beyond just casual. He signs it "Jerry Salinger." (Salinger's full name was Jerome David.)

Writing from a hospital in Nuremburg, Germany, Salinger offers that nothing is wrong with him except "an almost constant state of despondency," and that his purpose in writing was "to talk to someone sane." The doctors, he wrote, had quizzed him about his sex life and his childhood, a suggestion they were employing Freudian tactics to get at the root of his melancholy.

Salinger asks Hemingway how his latest novel is coming and implores him not to sell it to a movie producer: "As Chairman of your many fan clubs, I know I speak for all the members when I say Down with Gary Cooper."

Of his own fledgling career: "I've written a couple more of my incestuous stories, and several poems, and part of a play." Possibly foretelling publication of "Catcher in the Rye," he relates that he has a "very sensitive novel in mind," and while he wishes to get out of the Army so he can pursue his writing, he worries that a psychiatric discharge might label him a "jerk" and damage his career.

Putnam said there was no indication that Hemingway answered the letter.

"Because we don't have other letters, I assume there wasn't other correspondence. There may have been and it may just not be here, but Hemingway was very good about keeping his correspondence so it could be the only letter between the two," he said.

Hemingway's widow, Mary, donated the letters to the library partly out of gratitude to the Kennedy Administration, which had helped arrange her to travel to Cuba and retrieve his papers after her husband's death in 1961, Putnam explained. The papers are kept in a room at the library that is not generally accessible to visitors.

Hemingway's son, Patrick, will attend the Sunday ceremony to honor Brigid Pasulka for her first novel, "A Long, Long Time Ago and Essentially True."

Stolen Henry Moore sculpture found in Toronto

NEW YORK (AP)—A Henry Moore bronze sculpture stolen from a New York City gallery in 2001 has been recovered from a Toronto gallery.

The $80,000 abstract sculpture of a reclining figure was found Wednesday at Miriam Shiell Fine Art. The gallery's owner said the consignor brought it in last week, and she searched the Art Loss Register database to see if it had been reported stolen.

"When a piece doesn't have any history, anything that is verifiable, you need to do due diligence," said Shiell, who has owned the gallery for 30 years.

The recovery came days after a Paul Klee painting stolen in 1989 was found in a Montreal art gallery.

Robert Landau searched the Art Loss Register database after a Florida art dealer tried to sell him the 1930 painting, "Portrait in the Garden." The $125,000 painting had been stolen from the Marlborough Gallery in New York City. Landau turned the piece over to U.S. authorities.

AP

In this undated photo released by The Art Loss Register database, a 1975 Henry Moore sculpture titled "Three Piece Reclining Figure: Maquette No. 4" is shown.

Despite the similarities in the cases, the thefts are unrelated, said Christopher Marinello, executive director of the London-based Art Loss Register. The register maintains a 350,000-item database of stolen artworks.

The abstract Moore sculpture titled "Three Piece Reclining Figure: Maquette No. 4" (1975) was reported stolen in November 2001 by the James Goodman Gallery. The bronze piece is 7 1/8 inches by 3 inches by 3 inches, a model of a larger sculpture.

Shiell said she was making arrangements to send the sculpture to the James Goodman Gallery.

A message left with James Goodman Gallery was not immediately returned Thursday.

Film breathes fire into dragons

By SUSAN WLOSZCZYNA
USA TODAY

Even the most dedicated fantasy-film fan would have to admit that movies with dragons all too often turn out to be a drag.

Cinematic serpents may date to the silent era, when filmmaker Fritz Lang had his hero slay a 60-foot-long mechanical puppet in 1924's "Die Nibelungen: Siegfried." But most recent big-screen outings, such as "Eragon," "Reign of Fire" and "Beowulf," that center on the slithery beasts have not exactly inflamed the box office or the audience's imagination.

No wonder the dragon-like beings in "Avatar" are known as banshees and the Jabberwocky is never called the "d" word in "Alice in Wonderland." It's partly a genre issue.

"Dragons have a similar appeal as dinosaurs do in the secular age," says Alfred Siewers, an associate professor of English at Bucknell University who specializes in medieval literature and lore. And, as "Jurassic Park" and its sequels have shown, there is money to be made from reptilian behemoths. "But film doesn't lend itself to portraying myth in a serious way. There tends to be an absurd element to it," including a tendency toward sword-and-sorcery kitsch.

The 3-D animated action-adventure "How to Train Your Dragon," however, is using a "more-is-more" philosophy to counteract any fire-breathing fatigue with no fewer than seven varieties of the winged creatures when the film flies into theaters Friday.

Directors Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois ("Lilo & Stitch") were recruited to take over the DreamWorks production with only 14 months left to meet their deadline. Their mission: reshaping the script — based on Cressida Cowell's popular books about a young pipsqueak Viking named Hiccup and his runty dragon Toothless — into something epic and less juvenile.

"We knew that dragons were almost a liability and we would have to overcome that by doing something fresh," DeBlois says. "The great thing is that the books have so many types of dragons. It is something that really hadn't been done before." The Harry Potter books also contain an assortment, such as the Hungarian Horntail that pursued everyone's favorite boy wizard in The Goblet of Fire, but the movie versions don't dwell on them.

To broaden the all-ages appeal of "How to Train Your Dragon," the directors turned Hiccup into a brainy teen who lacks the killer instinct, much to the chagrin of his burly Viking chief father. And they remodeled Toothless into a fearsome all-black and leathery Night Fury that attacks the Viking village like a phantom in the dark. "He's the Ferrari of dragons," Sanders says. "Very, very fast. A lot of dragons have giant scales and are spiny. He has the clean, sleek look of a panther."

Another switch: The dragons emit noises but remain speechless. "It's another one of those dragon-movie cliches," DeBlois says. "We've already seen that in Eragon and Dragonheart. We wanted to do this film without magic and talking dragons. It makes it easier to believe they could have existed."

In Loving Memory

†JESUS MIYASAKI BABAUTA

Born on December 24, 1933 and was called by his Creator to his eternal rest on Sunday, March 21, 2010

In his new life, he now joins his:
WIFE : †Petra Reyes Babauta
PARENTS : †Juan Cruz & †Maria Miyasaki Babauta
PARENTS IN LAW : †Jose Cruz & †Rufina Camacho Delos Reyes
SON : †William Reyes Babauta

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his children:
Juan R. and Loretta Babauta & Children
Joseph R. and Lydia A. Babauta & Children
Oscar R. and Lorraine W. Babauta & Children
Donald R. Babauta & Children
Diego R. and Dolorina J. Babauta & Children
Patricia B. and John A. Camacho & Children
Terry B. and Frank B. Castro & Children
Franklin R. and Celina R. Babauta and Children
Anthony R. and Meliza DLG. Babauta & Children
Jesse R. Babauta

†Jesus is also survived by his brothers, sisters, in-laws and families.

Daily Mass of Intention is being celebrated at San Roque Church at 6:00pm followed by Holy Rosary.

On Monday, March 29, 2010 at 7:30am, his remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel in Beach Road Garapan to San Roque Church. Responso Service will be at 8:00am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:30am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am. Interment service will be at San Roque Cemetery.

Si Yuus Ma'ase. Please join us in prayers.

THE FAMILY

Gloria Estefan leads march for Cuban dissidents

MIAMI (AP)—A teary but smiling Gloria Estefan mounted the stage at the end of a march she spearheaded that drew tens of thousands of demonstrators in Miami's Little Havana to support Cuban dissidents Thursday.

"Thank you Miami," Estefan told the crowd that packed the street. "We are a people united by our love for freedom. We are here with all our different flags. That is what this great country allows us to do."

Shouting "Libertad! Libertad!" the marchers gathered in support of the Ladies in White, a group of Cuban mothers and wives of 75 dissidents arrested in a 2003 government crackdown there. Last week, as the Ladies in White marched through Havana to mark the anniversary of the arrests, pro-government groups surrounded them and Cuban state security agents put several in choke holds.

At Thursday's Miami demonstration, many brought children and grandparents.

Estefan, a Cuban-born, Grammy award winning singer and songwriter, held up a photo of the Ladies in White and two gladiola stems, the same flowers the Cuban dissidents carry when marching. Beside her were other singers, including Pit Bull, Willy Chirino, Natalia Jimenez and Luis Fonsi.

A small plane flew overhead towing a banner that read, in Spanish, "Freedom for the Political Prisoners."

The march was peaceful, with different generations standing together and, unlike past marches, few angry shouts against Fidel Castro, the island nation's longtime leader.

Cuba's human rights record has drawn world attention in recent weeks with the death of dissident hunger striker Orlando Zapata Tamayo, the hospitalization of a second activist, Guillermo Farinas, and most recently, video of the treatment of the Ladies in White.

"I see the rest of the world speaking out, I see the European Union speaking out, people who usually side with Fidel Castro," Estefan said in advance of the demonstration. "I thought, 'My God. I'm a woman. I'm Cuban. I have the opportunity to speak out because of the music thing. It's something I have to do.'"

'Real World' star 'Puck' injured in car crash

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Reality TV star David "Puck" Rainey has been arrested on suspicion of drunken driving after being seriously injured in a car crash on a rural San Diego County road with his 8-year-old son, officials said.

The bad boy bike messenger featured on the San Francisco-set third season of MTV's "The Real World" was drunk Saturday night when he veered off the road in Descanso, east of San Diego, and rolled down an embankment, California Highway Patrol Officer Brian Pennings said Thursday.

Rainey was pinned in the Ford hatchback, but his son, Bogart, freed himself from the vehicle and flagged down a passing motorist, Pennings said.

The pair were flown to University of California, San Diego Medical Center, where Rainey was found to have sustained serious injuries.

Rainey's manager, Michael Martin, said Bogart was released to his mother and Rainey's wife, Betty, Wednesday while Rainey remained in the hospital to undergo several surgeries.

A hospital nursing supervisor said Thursday that Rainey was in good condition, but could provide no other details.

Pennings says Rainey will be charged with driving under the influence, child endangerment and driving without a license.

Martin had no comment on the charges against Rainey.

Nick giving 'Big Help' award to first lady

NEW YORK (AP)—First lady Michelle Obama is getting attention from the Nickelodeon kids' television network—and it has nothing to do with green slime. Nickelodeon said Thursday it will honor Obama at the Kids' Choice Awards with its "Big Help" award for her "Let's Move" campaign to help cut down on childhood obesity. She has taped a message for Saturday's show.

"For once we will see all the forces aligning—not just to place blame, but in paving the way forward," said Marva Smalls, chief of staff for the MTV Networks and Nickelodeon Kids and Family Group.

AP

In this March 16, 2010 file photo, first lady Michelle Obama speaks at the Grocery Manufacturers Association Science Forum meeting in Washington.

Nick has been working with the first lady on the campaign, donating $3 million to school and after-school programs for physical play.

Obama's award starts Nickelodeon's "Millions on the Move" campaign. Over the next few months, Nickelodeon will feature public service announcements to encourage kids to stay active and to promote activities that would help the environment. Nick will also encourage community service and, in late summer, focus on a campaign to encourage preschoolers to be ready for school.

Not being present at the Kids' Choice Awards means the first lady will avoid being doused with slime, which Nick frequently does as a prank to people involved in its show.

She and her husband are competing in the category of "Cutest Couple," with the actors in the "Twilight" love triangle.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Music manager sues Axl Rose for nearly $2 million

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Axl Rose is being sued by a famed music manager who claims the singer owes him nearly $2 million in unpaid commissions. Front Line Management, which was founded by Irving Azoff, sued Rose in Los Angeles on Thursday for nearly $1.9 million in unpaid fees. The company claims it had an oral agreement with Rose to receive 15 percent of the Guns N' Roses' frontman's commissions. The lawsuit states the commissions are due on more than $12 million in earnings Rose made for performances abroad. Attempts to reach Rose's current management were unsuccessful. Azoff has represented famous musicians such as The Eagles and Joe Walsh and is currently the executive chairman of Live Nation Entertainment Inc., which recently merged with Ticketmaster Entertainment.

Roger Ebert plans to produce new movie review show

CHICAGO (AP)—Roger Ebert says he and his wife are going ahead with plans to produce a new movie review television program with the working title "Roger Ebert presents At the Movies." The famous movie reviewer wrote Thursday on his Chicago Sun-Times blog that he can't give details, but they're "deeply involved" in talks. Ebert says they've held video tests with potential hosts and they know who they will use. He says the new show would have a strong presence online. The Pulitzer Prize-winning reviewer writes that he would like to make "occasional appearances" on the air. Ebert lost his ability to speak after cancer surgery. Ebert also writes: "the Thumbs will return," referring to the well-known "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" reviews.

Oscars moved back into late February for 2011

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Academy Awards are moving back to February. Awards organizers said Thursday next year's Oscar ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 27. That's about a week earlier than this season's awards show, which was held March 7 to avoid conflicting with the Winter Olympics. Though the show used to be held in late March, the Oscars have been staged in late February in most recent years to shorten the long Hollywood awards season. Nominations for the 83rd annual Oscars will be announced Jan. 25.

MTV sets schedule for final season of 'The Hills'

NEW YORK (AP)—MTV's hit series "The Hills" is coming to an end after one more season. The network said Thursday the sixth and last season of the popular reality soap will begin April 27. Twelve new episodes will be aired before "The Hills" calls it quits. It has been one of MTV's most popular series, and has made stars out of featured couple Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt. MTV Programming President Tony DiSanto promised the series would go out on a high note with drama, emotion and "an organic culmination of this saga." The fifth season of "The Hills" was one of the top 10 original series on cable TV last year. A DVD of that season will go on sale the same day as the sixth season begins.

California seeks tiny tax fee from Jackson estate

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Add the state of California to the list of those who claim Michael Jackson owes them money, but the debt isn't exactly going to close the state's budget gap. California's tax board filed a creditor's claim Wednesday against the late King of Pop's estate for $1,647. The state claims the money is due because it had to request that Jackson file a state income tax form for the 2007 tax year. Jackson's estate has been hit with dozens of creditor's claims ranging from a few thousand dollars to millions in allegedly unpaid debts. The late singer's estate evaluates each claim before deciding whether to pay it. Howard Weitzman, an attorney for Jackson's estate, says he hasn't seen California's claim but that if the money is owed, it'll get paid.

Good girl feels tempted to be just a little bit bad

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm 16 and have grown up religious my whole life. I get good grades and stay out of trouble. A lot of my friends have done crazy things like drinking and partying, but I haven't. Because of this, I have the reputation of being a "goody-two-shoes."

I'm not saying it's a bad thing being a good girl, but I don't want to be a goody-two-shoes. Part of me wants to try some of the stuff my friends have been doing, but I don't want to lose my parents' trust. Please help!

RESTLESS IN OREGON

DEAR RESTLESS: You have your parents' trust because you have earned it. Before you try any of the "stuff" your friends have been doing, ask yourself what the consequences could be. Yes, it's hard being labeled a goody-two-shoes—but please look closely at who is doing the name-calling. A streetwise individual once told me, "The best way out of a jam is not to get into one in the first place." That tidbit has served me well, and that's why I'm passing it along to you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My daughter left our small Midwestern town for the West Coast to marry money. At 37, she finally snagged her millionaire. She thought it was going to give her a blank check.

She does live in a lovely home and drives an expensive foreign car, but that's where it ends. Everything is in his name, and her wedding ring is one we gave her, although he paid to remove the stone and have it polished. I told her then to walk away.

They have two children. Her son is a spoiled brat, completely self-absorbed like his dad. Her daughter has learning disabilities and is still at home.

More than one family member refers to her spouse as a horse's rear end. He rarely attends family events, which is really fine with everyone. At best, he can be described as rude and obnoxious.

My daughter would never leave him. She loves the lifestyle too much. If she only knew how most of her extended family think of them. I'm embarrassed by it, really.

I just thought your readers should know that marrying money isn't necessarily the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

HER MOM IN WISCONSIN

DEAR MOM: I'll say. Someone who marries for money usually ends up earning every single penny.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband was recently invited to the wedding of one of his co-workers. The wedding is in Mexico. Shouldn't these types of invitations be issued to family and very close friends only? I can't help but feel she is just looking for a gift. Is this proper, or am I "seeing" the bigger picture?

ANNOYED IN ILLINOIS

DEAR ANNOYED: No, and there are a few things wrong with this "picture." If the co-worker knows your husband is married, the invitation should have properly been addressed to "Mr. and Mrs." Since it wasn't, and I assume your husband has no intention of attending, he should send his regrets.

However, because the bride is someone he will be interacting with on an ongoing basis, the politic way to handle this would be to present the happy couple with a token gift from both of you upon their return—although you are not socially obligated to do so.

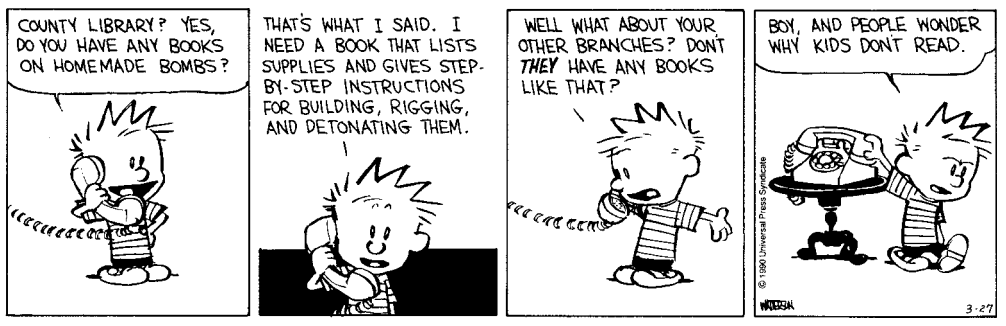
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

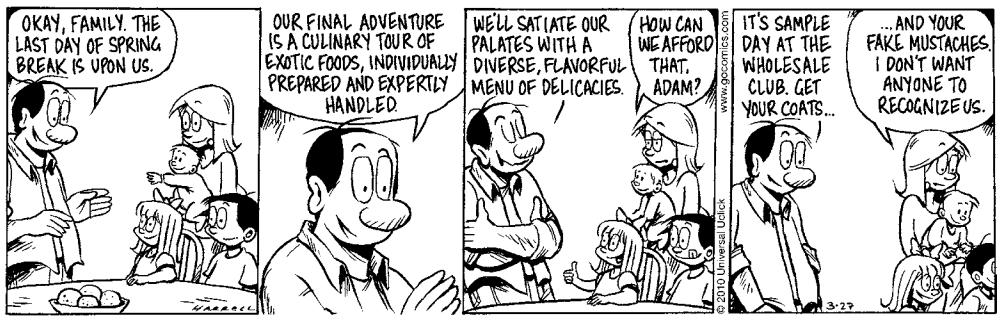

COUNTY LIBRARY? YES, DO YOU HAVE ANY BOOKS ON HOMEMADE BOMBS?
THAT'S WHAT I SAID. I NEED A BOOK THAT LISTS SUPPLIES AND GIVES STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING, RIGGING, AND DETONATING THEM.
WELL WHAT ABOUT YOUR OTHER BRANCHES? DON'T THEY HAVE ANY BOOKS LIKE THAT?
BOY, AND PEOPLE WONDER WHY KIDS DON'T READ.
© 1990 Universal Press Syndicate
3-27

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


OKAY, FAMILY. THE LAST DAY OF SPRING BREAK IS UPON US.
OUR FINAL ADVENTURE IS A CULINARY TOUR OF EXOTIC FOODS, INDIVIDUALLY PREPARED AND EXPERTLY HANDLED.
WE'LL SATIATE OUR PALATES WITH A DIVERSE, FLAVORFUL MENU OF DELICACIES.
HOW CAN WE AFFORD THAT, ADAM?
IT'S SAMPLE DAY AT THE WHOLESALE CLUB. GET YOUR COATS...
...AND YOUR FAKE MUSTACHES. I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO RECOGNIZE US.
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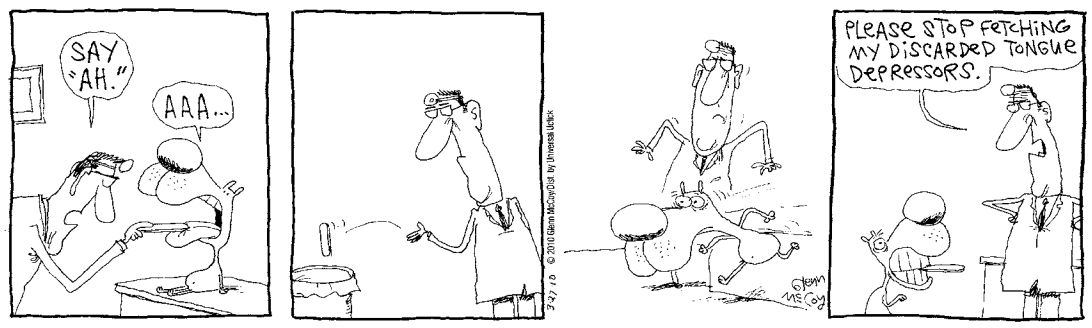
www.gocomics.com
3-27

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

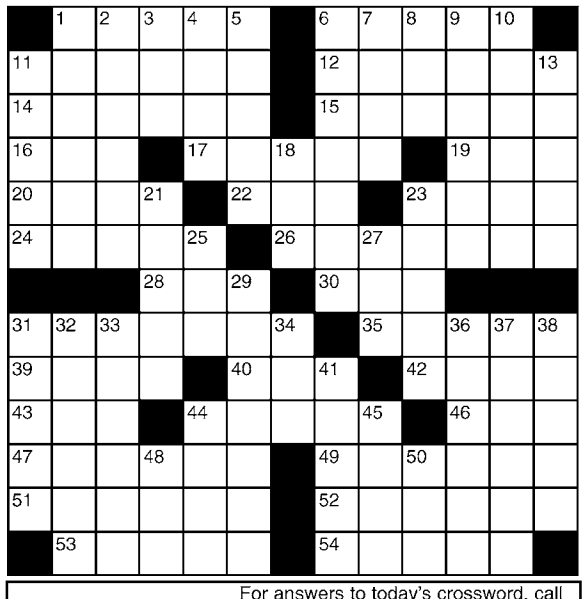
ACROSS
1 Attempts
6 Old saw
11 Low-pH
12 Fluctuation of tempo
14 World War II tank
15 Elderly eccentric
16 Storefront sign stats
17 Disprove
19 Anger
20 On the rocks
22 Before
23 — Domini
24 Holdup
26 Prokofiev's "The Love for Three —"
28 Cistern
30 Baltimore newspaper
31 Picket sign carrier
35 Phi Beta —
39 Horn sound
40 Scot's refusal
42 Czech or Croat
43 Last (Abbr.)
44 Military brass?
46 Hearty brew
47 Sports jacket
49 Hungry cow, in a sense
51 Tranquil
52 Shocked
53 Units of force
54 Friars Club tribute

DOWN
1 Hard to find
2 Hollywood glitter
3 Wood-shaping tool
4 Coffin stand
5 Landslide debris
6 Debating team
7 Air for a pair
8 Honest politician
9 Staring
10 Always, in verse
11 Garden pest
13 Sandwich cookies
18 Crony
21 Lifeboat's crane
23 Karenina and Kournikova
25 Tie up the telephone
27 Diving bird
29 Provides "fire" insurance?
31 Moviegoers' mementos
32 Rang out
33 Traffic circle
34 Tatter
36 Shopping centers
37 Least ruddy
38 Dodge
41 "Pomp and Circumstance" composer
44 Part of N.B.
45 Therefore
48 Buddhist sect
50 "Eureka!"

Solution time: 27 mins.

P	E	C	A	N	■	C	O	N	■	A	R	R
T	E	A	S	E	■	A	D	O	■	T	O	E
A	L	T	E	R	■	B	O	T	C	H	U	P
■	■	■	C	A	V	I	A	R	■	R	O	S	E
A	S	H	■	Y	O	N	■	E	A	S	E	L
D	O	U	G	■	T	A	S	T	Y	■	■	■
A	L	P	A	C	A	■	C	H	O	P	P	Y
■	■	■	R	I	S	E	R	■	N	A	S	A
F	E	E	L	S	■	L	E	G	■	T	I	P
A	L	L	I	■	G	A	E	L	I	C	■	■
K	E	T	C	H	U	P	■	A	D	H	O	C
E	N	O	■	A	S	S	■	S	L	U	R	P
D	A	N	■	T	H	E	■	S	E	P	T	A

Yesterday's answer 3-27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mariah Carey, 40; Quentin Tarantino, 47; Xuxa, 47; Michael York, 68

Happy Birthday: It's up to you to strive for perfection and to make your dreams a reality. Don't let uncertainty rule. You may face conflict but that should only make you more determined to forge ahead. Follow your path and do your research. You'll find the facts you need to make the right personal, professional and financial changes. Your numbers are 4, 12, 16, 20, 25, 33, 42

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You need to test your skills. Get active and you'll be surprised what you can accomplish. Love will take on a mysterious edge that may leave you wondering where you stand. Let your experience and originality take over. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Someone will take advantage of you if you don't do your homework. Don't leave anything to chance and don't let anger and stubbornness cause you to make a foolish mistake. Stick to the things you know and do best. Your choice will control the outcome. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Problems at home will surface if you don't keep things out in the open. Volunteer to help an organization you believe in and you will enhance your reputation. Keeping busy will help you stay out of trouble. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): An opportunity to work will lead to new professional options. Communications and transportation will be riddled with confusion. Take down directions or instructions carefully. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't feel bad if you can't do everything that's asked of you. A money matter may be entwined in an emotional situation that makes it difficult for you to say no. Offer suggestions, not cash. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You may end up with a responsibility that costs you financially as well as emotionally. A partnership you are involved in may face some difficulty. Put family and domestic responsibilities first. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take care of family business or you may be held responsible for something that doesn't get done on time. Uncertainty regarding a job will cause you to second guess what you are doing and where you are heading. Don't waffle under pressure. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Make a personal move that will free up cash and allow you the freedom to work on some of the projects you have had to put on the back burner. Money is heading your way and an opportunity that will allow you to try something altogether different will interest you. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You may feel like avoiding someone you've promised something to but, if you aren't following through, be straightforward about your change of plans. You will be in a high cycle regarding love and romance. Chances are good it will take up your time, interest and hard-earned cash. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't count on someone coming through with something you've requested. Be ready to jump in and take over whatever needs to be done. A relationship you have with a friend or neighbor is likely to face difficulty. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): If you are straight about what you want or expect, you will find out what you can and cannot have. A relationship can change your way of life. An offer will help you secure the money you need for something you want to pursue. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You may need to take care of someone who is going through a rough time. Don't let this drag you down or cause uncertainties in your personal life. Talk things over with the people who count and you will come up with a workable solution. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative, original and strive for perfection. You have humor, intelligence and charm.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		6			7	9		
	3				2		6	
4								3
3	5		2		9			
			6		4		2	7
1								5
	6		1				7	
		2	3			6		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/27

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	9	3	7	2	4	5	8	1
4	7	1	3	5	8	6	2	9
5	2	8	6	1	9	4	7	3
3	1	4	2	9	7	8	5	6
7	5	2	8	6	1	9	3	4
8	6	9	4	3	5	7	1	2
2	4	5	1	8	6	3	9	7
9	3	6	5	7	2	1	4	8
1	8	7	9	4	3	2	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/26

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

FRANCE'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM **Solution: 8 letters**

P	E	L	U	O	R	A	M	O	N	E	T	T	A	C
M	O	G	N	I	L	O	O	C	I	V	A	U	X	A
C	U	W	E	B	E	L	L	E	V	I	L	L	E	R
R	I	I	E	L	L	I	V	N	A	M	A	L	(F)	B
B	S	M	N	R	O	U	T	P	U	T	D	(U)	A	O
D	U	E	O	A	E	R	S	L	N	Y	(E)	T	S	N
A	A	G	N	T	R	I	E	E	C	(L)	L	N	T	I
M	O	B	E	I	A	U	M	H	D	N	I	E	N	T
P	T	U	R	Y	L	N	C	E	E	E	V	G	O	S
I	U	I	A	A	O	E	P	A	H	P	E	O	N	A
E	R	L	P	R	F	H	V	T	C	T	R	N	I	C
R	B	D	I	L	E	A	D	A	I	R	W	L	H	I
R	I	V	O	N	E	X	P	O	R	T	U	O	C	R
E	N	G	I	N	E	E	R	I	N	G	O	A	R	T
E	E	X	P	E	R	T	I	S	E	Z	S	D	S	G

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Atomic, Belleville, Blayais, Bugey, Build, Carbon, Cattenom, Chinon, Chooz, Civaux, Cooling, Cruas, Dampierre, Deliver, Engineering, Enriched, Environmental, Expertise, Export, Flamanville, Fuel, Golfech, Gravelines, Growth, Heat, Lead, Load, Maroule, Nogent, Output, Paluel, Penly, Phenix, Power, Role, Safe, Tricastin, Turbine, Uranium

Yesterday's Answer: Liquid

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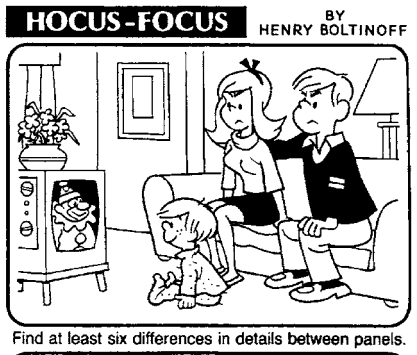
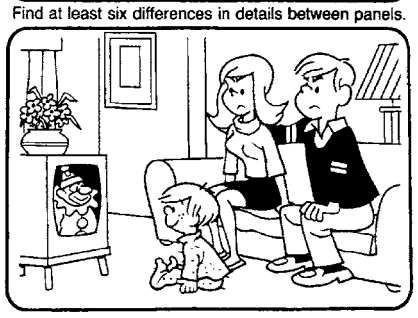
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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5. Picture has been moved. 6. Plant has more flowers.

Wishing Well®

5	7	8	3	7	3	4	7	6	3	5	4	7
B	L	L	C	O	R	E	O	Y	E	E	X	K
6	2	8	5	3	2	4	6	5	4	2	6	4
O	B	I	S	A	E	U	U	E	D	C	A	E
3	2	8	3	8	6	7	8	7	8	7	6	5
T	H	F	I	E	R	T	I	O	M	T	E	N
4	2	6	3	4	3	5	6	8	3	2	6	7
C	O	T	V	O	E	S	H	P	P	O	E	H
4	5	2	6	4	7	4	7	3	7	3	6	7
N	I	S	S	F	E	I	F	E	U	R	T	T
6	4	6	8	2	6	8	4	7	4	7	5	4
A	D	N	R	Y	D	O	E	U	N	R	B	C
6	7	4	6	5	3	5	8	6	3	8	3	8
A	E	E	R	L	I	E	V	D	O	E	D	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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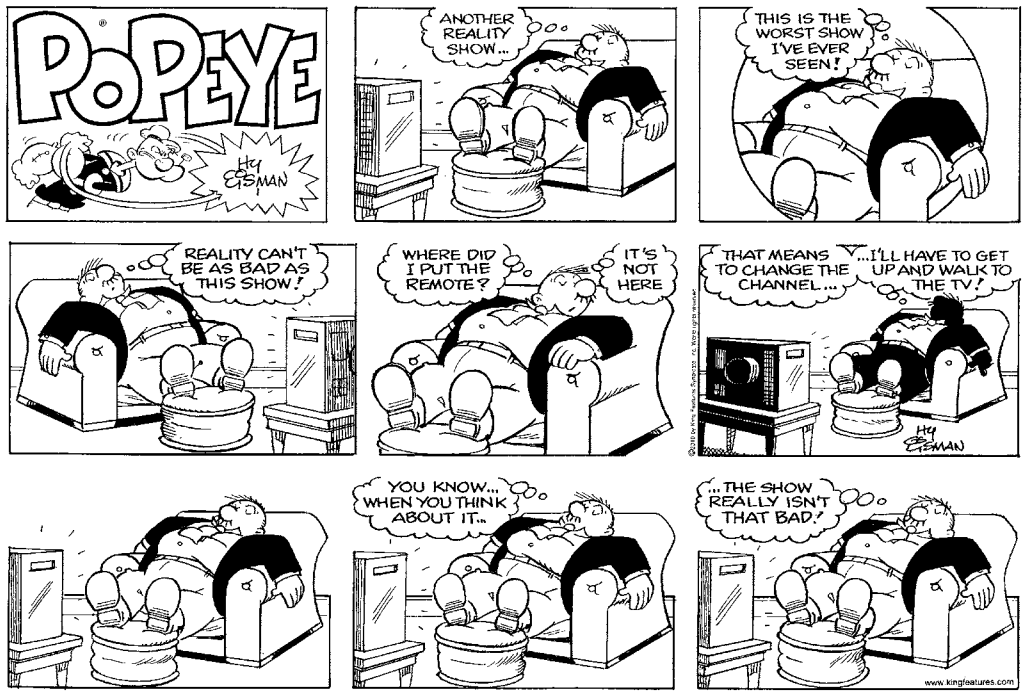
POPEYE
HEY EISMAN
ANOTHER REALITY SHOW...
THIS IS THE WORST SHOW I'VE EVER SEEN!
REALITY CAN'T BE AS BAD AS THIS SHOW!
WHERE DID I PUT THE REMOTE?
IT'S NOT HERE
THAT MEANS TO CHANGE THE CHANNEL...
...I'LL HAVE TO GET UP AND WALK TO THE TV!
HEY EISMAN
YOU KNOW... WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT...
...THE SHOW REALLY ISN'T THAT BAD!
www.kingfeatures.com

They'll Do It Every Time — by Al Scaduto

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING— (DON'T ASK DEP'T)
WHAT SOFT DRINK CAN I GET YOU?
DO YOU HAVE LO-COLA?
I'D LIKE NO-CAFFEINE NOLA-NOLA..
I'LL HAVE DIET FRAZZLE..
FAT-FREE POPSIE-NOLA..
Thanx to W. BEECHER, MIAMI, FL.
ZERO DIAGNOSIS—
I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THAT DOCTOR... HE CAN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH ME...
J.P. EPSOM M.D.
Thanx to S. PEARLMAN, PHILADELPHIA, PA.
SAY WHAT?
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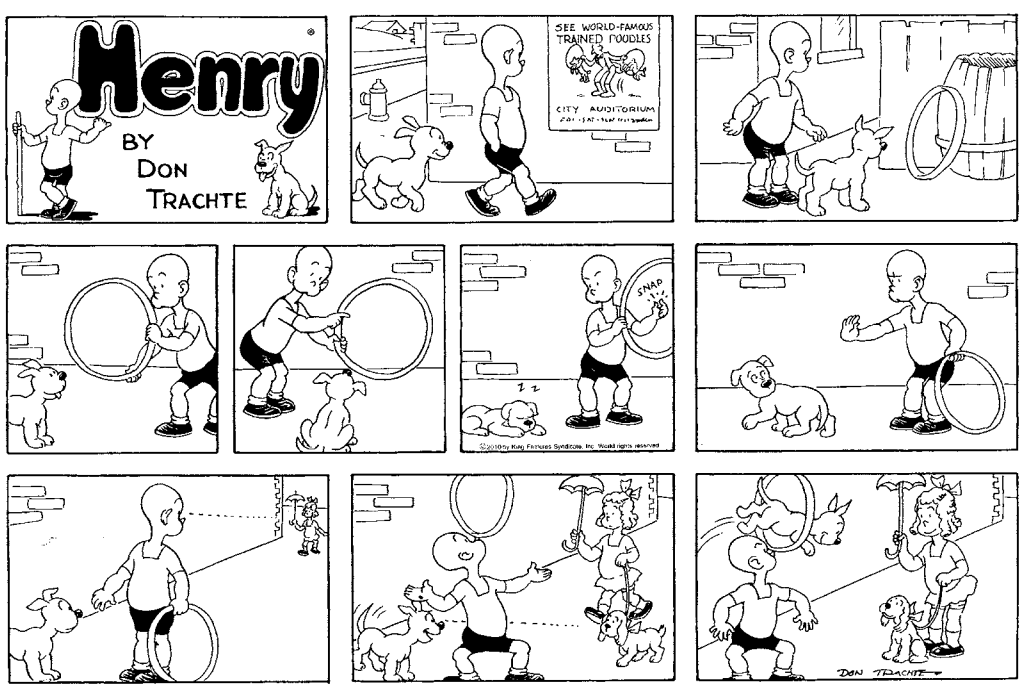
I JUST GET HOME FROM MY BUSINESS TRIP AND I HAFTA HEAR THAT YOU'RE STEALING YOUR SISTER'S JELLY BEANS! A THIEF-- IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO BE, EH? AREN'T YOU ASHAMED? WELL-L-L ?
Thanx to J. COLBY, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
HOTEL MOSQUITO
HOTEL RANCID
HOTEL FLEABAG
HOTEL INSOMNIA



Super Crossword

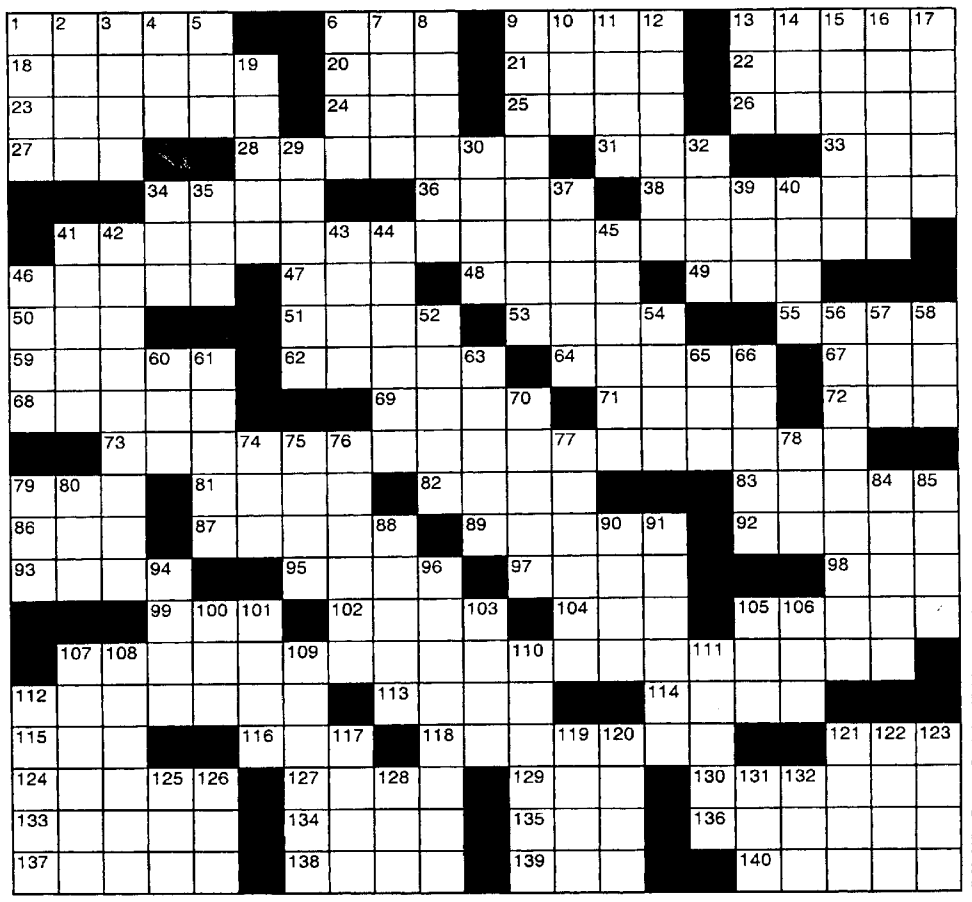
ILL HUMOR

ACROSS

1 Monty Python's Michael
6 Deli choice
9 Gear teeth
13 Film pterodactyl
18 Porthos' pal
20 Team scream
21 Well-ventilated
22 Felony
23 Start of a remark
24 Funnyman Philips
25 Deep purple
26 Confused
27 Faux —
28 Vince of "Ben Casey"
31 Small shots
33 PC key
34 "Rosanna" rockers
36 Couple
38 Part of HOMES
41 Part 2 of remark
46 Minnesota city
47 Alias initials
48 Heavy metal instrument?
49 Child welfare org.
50 Mil. unit
51 Say it isn't so
53 Labyrinth
55 Relax
59 Gentle as —
62 Abhorrence
64 A Barbary State
67 "Norma —" ('79 film)
68 Buccaneers' headquarters
69 Actress Ione
71 Football's Swann
72 Woodsman's tool
73 Part 3 of remark
79 — Mahal
81 Alley Oop's love
82 Out-of-this-world org.
83 Invasions
86 President Bush was one
87 Overturn
89 Macho type
92 Roast host
93 Circus sight
95 Teri of "Tootsie"
97 — majesty
98 Canterbury quaff
99 Hoagy
102 Wordsworth work
104 ABA member
105 Teach on the side
107 Part 4 of remark
112 Deprive (of)
113 Wooden strip
114 Olympic event
115 Flight
116 Tasty tuber
118 Proposition
121 Carol opener
124 Inevitable activity
127 Hungarian sheepdog
129 Shaq's pack
130 End of remark
133 Daybreak
134 Toast topper
135 Perlman or Palillo
136 Bostonian, for one
137 "The Brandon — Story" ('98 film)
138 So. state
139 Still
140 Self-confidence

DOWN

1 Theatrical Joseph
2 District
3 Neighbor of Thailand
4 Mischief-maker
5 Zilch
6 Make coffee
7 "Rama — Ding Dong" ('61 tune)
8 Legendary athlete Jim
9 Pepper
10 Vinegar's partner
11 Chow
12 Token
13 JVC competitor
14 Terrier's tidbit
15 Win over
16 Audrey Tautou role
17 Peachy-keen
19 Take care of
29 El —, AR
30 Tapered seam
32 Cut a cuticle
34 Decimal base
35 Two — kind
37 Morocco's capital
39 Cable channel
40 Thickening agent
41 Writer Rogers St. Johns
42 Thingumbob
43 Got by, with "out"
44 Disappear
45 Lapis —
46 Part of Q.E.D.
52 Canadian territory
54 "Only Time" singer
56 Destroy
57 Getz's instrument
58 Fairway accessory
60 Speedometer abbr.
61 "Blue —" ('77 hit)
63 Blabby bird
65 Business abbr.
66 — drum
70 One of the Fords
74 Weasel word?
75 First name in fashion
76 Finger food
77 Composer Jean-Philippe
78 "Platoon" setting
79 Gumshoe
80 Chicken — king
84 Apollo's isle
85 Soothsayer
88 Witty
90 Vino center
91 Irritate
94 Punta del —
96 Link
100 Actress Thurman
101 Bunch of birds
103 "Pyramus and Thisbe," e.g.
105 Playground game
106 Luau instrument
107 Confederation
108 January stoat
109 Earl Grey's place
110 William Sydney Porter
111 Man of the cloth?
112 Great time
117 Stubborn sort
119 Hautboy
120 Be bombastic
121 "Kon- —"
122 Summertime treats
123 — -Ball
125 "Sister Act" extra
126 Scholastic abbr.
128 Deighton or Dawson
131 "The Bells" monogram
132 — -Cat



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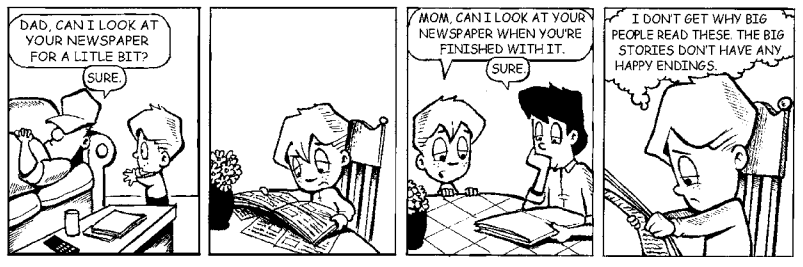
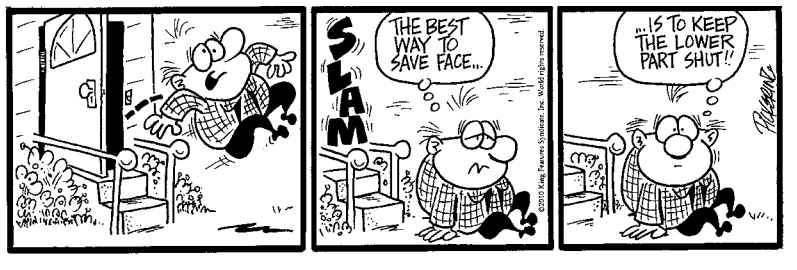
Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: By what other name do most people know Esther Pauline Friedman?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What South American country lies between Colombia and Peru?
3. FOOD & DRINK: What are the two ingredients in a Black Russian cocktail?
4. LANGUAGE: What does the Greek suffix "gamy" mean in English?
5. MUSIC: What does the musical direction "estinto" mean?
6. HISTORY: In what year did test pilot Chuck Yeager break the sound barrier?
7. TELEVISION: What is the name of the dog on "Family Guy" animated series?
8. AD SLOGANS: "The dogs kids love to bite" were made by which company?
9. SCIENCE: What would an entomologist study?
10. MOVIES: What brother and sister had acting roles in "Sixteen Candles"?

Amber Waves — by Dave T. Phipps


DAD, CAN I LOOK AT YOUR NEWSPAPER FOR A LITTLE BIT?
SURE
MOM, CAN I LOOK AT YOUR NEWSPAPER WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED WITH IT.
SURE
I DON'T GET WHY BIG PEOPLE READ THESE. THE BIG STORIES DON'T HAVE ANY HAPPY ENDINGS.

The Spats — by Jeff Pickering



Answers

1. Ann Landers, her pseudonym
2. Ecuador
3. Vodka and Kahlua
4. Marriage
5. Play as soft as possible
6. 1947
7. Brian
8. Armour
9. Insects
10. John and Joan Cusack

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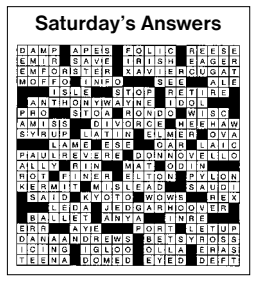
Saturday's Answers



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• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

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Classified Ads

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Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of: KARTRINA LYNN MANGLONA IGLECIAS Petitioner.	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0136 NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 6, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 15th day of March, 2010.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

Connie Lynn Manglona Iglecias
P.O. Box 5430
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No.: 483-3464/285-5286

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of: CONNIE LYNN MANGLONA IGLECIAS Petitioner.	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0137 NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 6, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 15th day of March, 2010.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

Alvin Jack Manglona Iglecias
P.O. Box 5430
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No.: 285-6284/285-5286

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of: ALVIN JACK MANGLONA IGLECIAS Petitioner.	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0147 NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 6, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 19th day of March, 2010.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
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Butler rallies to beat top-seeded Syracuse

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Willie Veasley glanced up while running back on defense as his 3-pointer bounced high off the rim like so many of Butler's shots had before.

He paused, though, as the ball drifted back, caromed off the backboard and fell through the net—a huge bounce that helped seal the Bulldogs' 63-59 upset of top-seeded Syracuse on Thursday night in the West Regional semifinals.

Veasley followed his fortunate 3 with a tip-in as the Bulldogs scored 11 straight points and became the latest mid-major team to knock off a top seed in the NCAA tournament.

Now, after reaching the regional finals for the first time in school history, Butler is one win from going home to Indianapolis for the Final Four. The Bulldogs next play second-seeded Kansas State, which beat Xavier 101-96 in double overtime.

"I was headed down the court on defense because I figured it was going to go over the top of the backboard. But I looked back and it came down and went through," Veasley said. "That was a H-O-R-S-E shot. I've never made a shot quite like that."

Veasley pumped his fist and grinned as he continued toward the other end. It was fitting that he was already headed back on defense. Instead of Syracuse's vaunted zone controlling the game, Butler's pesky man-to-man defense was the difference as the Bulldogs scrapped through poor shooting and won their 23rd straight game.

"We said this word over and over in Indianapolis, and that word is `resolve.' These guys have resolve," Butler coach Brad Stevens said. "It's hard to measure, but they've got it."

The Bulldogs (31-4) certainly did in the last five minutes, holding the Orange without a point from the time Syracuse went up by four with 5:23 left until a too-little-too-late layup with 35 seconds remaining.

Gordon Hayward scored 17 points and started the celebration while dribbling out the clock after the Bulldogs forced Syracuse into its 18th turnover.

The Orange (30-5) made only three more field goals than turnovers in another loss in the round of 16. Syracuse hasn't played in the regional finals since winning the 2003 national title.

"The game was a story of turnovers. They didn't make turnovers," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "They were really good with the basketball. We just had 18 turnovers and you can't give away that many possessions."

Veasley finished with 13 points and three steals. Ronald Nored finished with five steals and hit a 3-pointer to start the decisive run.

"Under any circumstance, I think we're poised. You have to be tough," said Nored, whose 3-pointer with 3:14 left cut Syracuse's lead to 54-53.

Wes Johnson had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Orange, the second No. 1 seed to go down. Northern Iowa stunned top-ranked Kansas in the second round of the Midwest Regional last weekend.

Scoop Jardine added 14 points and five assists and Andy Rautins scored 15, including a 3-pointer to open the second half. That sent the Orange on a 15-4 run that gave them their first lead.

But the sloppy Orange couldn't overcome all their turnovers, and the 2-3 zone that so many wondered whether Butler could crack was no match for the Bulldogs' sharp shooting in the final minutes after Syracuse had taken a 54-50 lead with 5:23 left—then didn't score again for almost five minutes.

"We knew they pride themselves on defense and they played us tough," Johnson said. "We accomplished a lot this season as the expectations for this team weren't very high. We won games we weren't supposed to and won the Big East Conference outright. We have a lot to be happy about. But to lose like this, it hurts."

After Nored hit a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to one, Matt Howard scored inside to put the Bulldogs back ahead and then Veasley got his fortunate bounce off the rim and backboard to put Butler up 58-54.

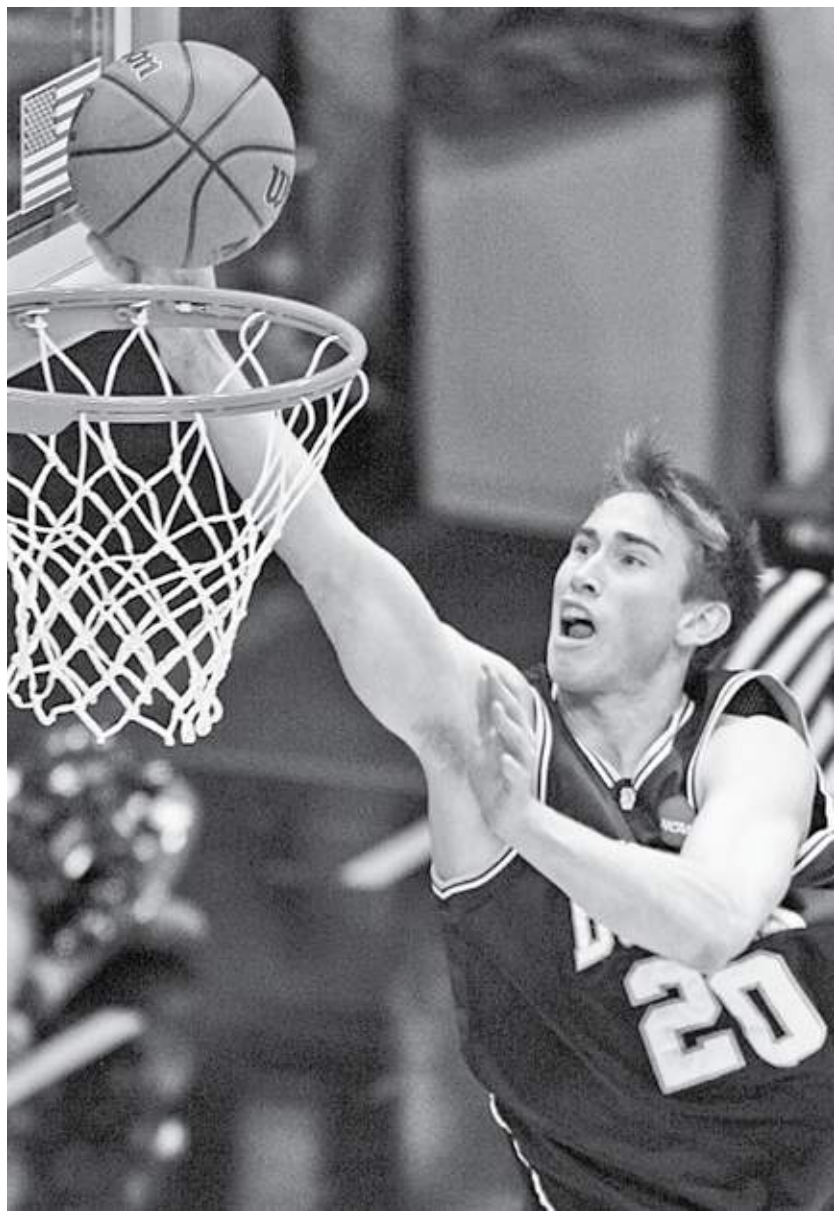
Veasley added a tip-in on Butler's next possession, and the Bulldogs held on.

After leading by 12 in the first half, the Horizon League champions were in jeopardy of getting run over by the Orange as they recovered from a frustrating start. But Syracuse could never get its transition game going and the easy baskets weren't there, thanks to the Bulldogs.

Butler was just 6 for 24 from 3-point range, but the Bulldogs never stopped shooting from beyond the arc—and hustling back on defense.

Syracuse had one good break late in the second half and it turned out to be the last. After a 3-pointer by Rautins put his team up 52-50, Johnson grabbed a defensive rebound and got the Orange off and running on the kind of fast break they flashed all season before getting stymied by Butler.

Johnson passed to Jardine, who got the ball to Kris Joseph for a dunk that put Syracuse up 54-50 with 5:23 left.



AP

Butler's Gordon Hayward shoots the ball against Syracuse in the first half of an NCAA West Regional semifinal college basketball game in Salt Lake City, Thursday March 25, 2010.

The Orange didn't score again until Jardine's layup with 35 seconds remaining cut Butler's lead to 61-56.

Syracuse played again without center Arinze Onuaku, sidelined since the Big East tournament with a right quadriceps injury, and had to sit 6-foot-9 Rick Jackson when he was called for his fourth foul with 8:08 left.

Jackson finished with just four points, but did pull down nine rebounds.

Syracuse's loss left No. 2 seed West Virginia as the only Big East team remaining in the tournament. The league received eight bids—most of any conference.

No. 2 Kansas State 101, No. 6 Xavier 96, 2OT

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Jacob Pullen made a 3-pointer with 31.2 seconds left in the second overtime for the go-ahead points, and second-seeded Kansas State beat No. 6 Xavier in a thriller.

Terrell Holloway answered with two free throws, but Pullen came back with two of his own. Then, Xavier's Dante Jackson missed a 3-pointer that would've tied it and the Wildcats (29-7) iced it.

Xavier's Jordan Crawford hit a 35-foot shot with 4 seconds left in the first OT to tie it. Holloway sent the game into the first overtime by making three straight free throws after being fouled while shooting from behind the arc with 5 seconds left.

Crawford led Xavier (26-9) with 32 points and Pullen led the Wildcats with 28, including eight in the second overtime.

EAST REGIONAL
No. 1 Kentucky 62, No. 12 Cornell 45

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP)—Kentucky avoided the latest big upset by the Big Red.

John Wall, DeMarcus Cousins and Patrick Patterson stopped Cornell's captivating NCAA tournament run, sending the top-seeded Wildcats to a win in the East Regional semifinals.

With much of the Carrier Dome crowd—and the country—pulling for an upset by the 12th-seeded Ivy Leaguers, Cornell bolted to a 10-2 lead in the opening minutes.

But Kentucky overcame the early deficit with a swarming defense, spoiling all the fun at Cornell's loudest and largest pep rally.

John Calipari has the Wildcats (35-2) in the regional final in his first season, erasing much of the sting of the program's decade-long slide from the top.

The climb back is nearly complete. Kentucky moved within one win of its first Final Four since winning the national championship in 1998 and will play second-seeded West Virginia on Saturday.

All the fan adulation and media hype shifted to Cornell this week after brainy Big Red (29-5) stunned the field with an improbable run to the round of 16. This was no Revenge of the Nerds—they proved they could play with the big boys.

No. 2 West Virginia 69, No. 11 Washington 56

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP)—Da'Sean Butler shook off a sore right hand and helped West Virginia shake off feisty Washington to reach the East Regional final.

Butler kept playing after hurting himself midway through the second half and scored 14 points while Kevin Jones added 18 and eight rebounds in leading the second-seeded Mountaineers over the 11th-seeded Huskies.

Playing their first game without injured point guard Darryl Bryant, coach Bob Huggins' Big East tournament champions (30-6) won their ninth in a row and set a school record for victories, surpassing the mark set by the Jerry West-led 1958-59 team that lost in the NCAA title game.

Justin Holiday scored 14 points for the Huskies (26-10), who were at a disadvantage after leading scorer Quincy Pondexter picked up his third foul with 4:27 left in the first half. Pondexter didn't score his first basket until 2:30 into the second half, and finished with seven points.

Washington had a nine-game win streak snapped.

Holmes takes early lead at Bay Hill

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Davis Love III is trying not to look ahead and concern himself only with the tournaments on his schedule. He gave himself reason to hope Thursday that the Masters might still be on the list.

Love chipped in twice during a five-hole stretch that he played in 6 under early in his round, then finished strong with a 45-foot birdie and an 8-foot par putt that felt just as good for a 6-under 66 and a share of the lead in the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

J.B. Holmes, among the early starters, played bogey-free in calm conditions and also had a 66.

Love is in a position that has become all too familiar of late. He has only two weeks left to earn a trip to Augusta National, which he has not played the last two years. His only chance is to win at Bay Hill or next week in the Houston Open.

He knows that. He's just trying not to think about it.

"It's always in the back of your mind—or the front of your mind," Love said. "After a few weeks where I played kind of poorly ... I was just mentally kind of frazzled. I just said, 'You're going to have to just to play the ones you get in and do the best job you can and quit worrying about everything else,'" Love said.

He did a good job of that Thursday at Bay Hill, even after opening with a bogey from a plugged lie in the bunker. Then he came up short of the par-3 second hole, and that's where it all changed.

Love chipped in for birdie, holed a 12-foot birdie putt on the third hole, and chipped in for eagle from short of the par-5 fourth green. Then came another birdie from about 15 feet, and a 4-iron to 10 feet on the par-5 sixth that he two-putted for a birdie.

Just like that, he was near the top of the leaderboard.

"I kept it in play and kept myself either chipping or putting for birdie all day," he said.

Love has never won Palmer's tournament at Bay Hill, although he has come close. He finished a shot out of a playoff in 1999, then was runner-up to Tiger Woods a year later.

Woods is not playing Bay Hill, where is the two-time defending champion, for the first time in his PGA Tour career. He will play for the first time since his sex scandal in two weeks at the Masters.

Holmes' fortunes also changed quickly, although this was only one hole. After a good tee shot, his ball was in a divot, causing him to send his pitching wedge to the top tier of the green. He rolled in a 40-foot birdie putt, added an eagle two holes later on the par-5 12th and made it around the revamped Bay Hill course without a bogey.

Mike Weir of Canada had a rare moment when he reached a par 5 from a fairway bunker at No. 12 to set up one of his eight birdies on his way to a 5-under 67, tied with Henrik Stenson of Sweden.

O'Neal scores 24 as Heat humiliate Bulls

CHICAGO (AP)—Jermaine O'Neal scored 24 points and the Miami Heat jumped out to a 30-point halftime lead Thursday night to rout the Chicago Bulls 103-74.

Pushing for a better playoff seeding, Miami's third straight victory and ninth in 12 games lifted the Heat into the No. 6 slot in the Eastern Conference, a half game ahead of idle Charlotte.

The Bulls have lost 11 of 13, including a 10-game losing streak, and are in ninth place in the East.

O'Neal shot 9 for 14, Michael Beasley added 15 points and Udonis Haslem 14 on a night when Dwyane Wade scored only 12—14.5 under his average—in 29 minutes. But Wade didn't need to score against the outmanned Bulls. The former Chicago-area prep star had 10 assists and also five rebounds in the lopsided victory.

Hakim Warrick scored 14 points, and Taj Gibson and Derrick Rose had 12 each for the Bulls.

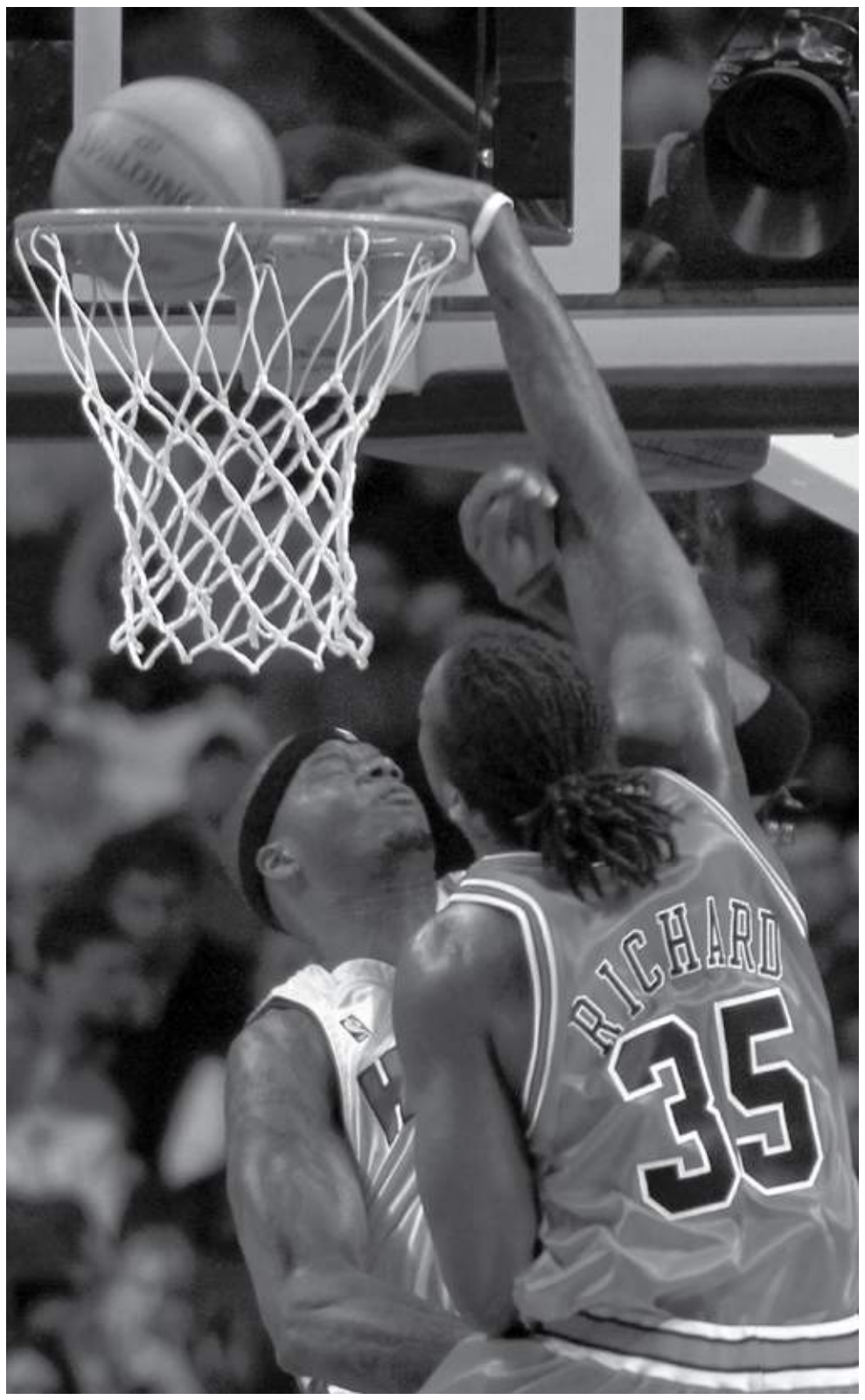
Wade had eight first-half points, hitting a jumper just before the buzzer to give the Heat a 63-33 lead as the boos poured down on the home team at the United Center.

Miami shot 60.5 percent in the first half, while the Bulls made only 28 percent. Miami finished the game at 52 percent with many easy shots against a listless Chicago defense.

O'Neal worked at will on the inside and had easy short-range jumpers, hitting 7 of 11 and scoring 18 points in the opening half. Haslem came off the bench with 10 points in the first half and the rout was on. Chicago was without injured forward Luol Deng (calf) and Joakim Noah played limited minutes as he recovers from plantar fasciitis.

Miami's Quentin Richardson, another former Chicago prep star, scored nine points in the final three minutes of the opening quarter as Miami closed on a 23-9 run for a 31-19 lead.

There were some heated words last time the teams met in Miami, a 108-95 Heat victory earlier this month. This time there wasn't much to say. The Heat's play did all the talking.



AP

Miami Heat's Jermaine O'Neal,left, stops Chicago Bulls' Chris Richard,right, as Richard misses a jam during the first half of an NBA basketball game Thursday, March 25, 2010 in Chicago.

Clippers 99, Rockets 93

At Houston, Craig Smith scored a season-high 25 points and had 10 rebounds as Los Angeles ended an 11-game road losing streak.

Drew Gooden had 17 points and 14 rebounds, Baron Davis scored 16 points and Eric Gordon added 14 for the Clippers, who hadn't won on the road since Feb. 2.

Trevor Ariza and Aaron Brooks each scored 18 points, and Luis Scola had 16 points and 14 rebounds for Houston.

Trail Blazers 101, Mavericks 89

At Portland, Oregon, LaMarcus Aldridge had 20 points and 10 rebounds as Portland defeated Dallas for the third time this season.

Marcus Camby added 17 points and 11 rebounds for Portland, which won the season series from the Mavericks for the first time since the 1998-99 season.

Portland has won five straight at home and six of its last seven games overall.

Caron Butler had 25 points for Dallas, which has lost four of its last five games after a 13-game winning streak.

Source: Eagles want a top 42 pick for McNabb

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Teams interested in acquiring Donovan McNabb will have to part with a high draft pick to get him.

A person familiar with trade discussions involving McNabb told the Associated Press the Philadelphia Eagles will only consider a deal for the six-time Pro Bowl quarterback if it includes a pick among the top 42 in next month's NFL draft.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Thursday because the team doesn't comment on potential trades.

After months of saying McNabb would return for another year, Eagles coach Andy Reid acknowledged Wednesday he was listening to offers for McNabb, Kevin Kolb and Michael Vick.

Oakland, Buffalo and St. Louis are considered to be most interested in McNabb. Each team has two picks in the top 42.

It's unlikely any of those teams would give up a first-round pick for McNabb. The Rams have the first overall selection, the Raiders pick eighth and the Bills are ninth. In the second round, however, the Rams have the 33rd pick, Raiders are 39th and Bills are 41st.

A rumored deal that would've sent McNabb to St. Louis for the 33rd pick and safety Oshiomoghe Atogwe was strongly denied by several Rams officials, including coach Steve Spagnuolo.

The Raiders are now considered the front-runner for McNabb if a deal is made. It's still possible the Eagles would accept a pick outside the top 42 if a team sweetened the offer with other picks and/or players.

McNabb is expendable because he's entering the final season of his contract and Kolb is considered the quarterback of the future. The 33-year-old McNabb has led Philadelphia to five NFC championship games in 11 seasons, winning one NFC title.

McNabb had an outstanding season last year until the final two games - consecutive losses at Dallas. The first loss to the Cowboys cost the Eagles the NFC East title and a first-round bye in the playoffs. The next one came in the wild-card playoff.

Jail or no jail? Fateful day arrives for Arenas

WASHINGTON (AP)—When Gilbert Arenas appeared at a charity event a few weeks ago, no amount of smiles and hugs could hide the underlying tension surrounding the next big date on his calendar.

"So that's what everybody's waiting for," Arenas said. "March 26, huh?"

The fateful date has arrived.

The Washington Wizards three-time All-Star point guard will be sentenced Friday in D.C. Superior Court on one felony count of violating the District of Columbia's strict gun laws. Judge Robert E. Morin will decide whether Arenas does jail time or gets probation.

The prosecution and defense teams stated their cases earlier this week in voluminous filings. It's all far beyond anything Arenas imagined on that December morning when he says he brought four guns to the locker room to play a prank on a teammate.

Prosecutors want Arenas to go to jail for at least three months. They point out that he lied repeatedly about why the guns were in the locker room, that he tried to cover up what happened, that he displayed a cavalier attitude about the whole affair, that he knew bringing guns into D.C. was illegal, and that he has a prior gun conviction.

"If any other individual—without the fame, power, and the wealth of this defendant—brought four firearms into Washington, D.C., for the purpose of a similar confrontation, fabricated a story to conceal that confrontation, provided convenient explanations in an attempt to mitigate his conduct that were proved false, joked about the incident to large groups, and stated that he did nothing wrong and felt no remorse, the government would seek their incarceration, and the Court would almost certainly give it," wrote Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Kavanaugh.

Arenas' lawyers are asking for probation and community service, arguing that he was playing a misguided joke with no intention to harm anybody. They point out that the guns were unloaded, that Arenas' lighthearted comments about the incident were misinterpreted, and that he's a good role model who goes beyond the call of duty when it comes to community service. They add that he was confused about D.C.'s gun laws, and that he's already been severely punished through humiliation and the loss of tens of millions of dollars from canceled endorsements and his suspension without pay for the rest of the NBA season.

"The whole world has watched as a man who brought four unloaded guns into the District of Columbia was required to accept a felony plea, suffer great personal and professional collateral consequences, register as a 'gun offender,' submit to court supervision, and face public scorn," the lawyers wrote. "This sad saga has sent a strong message to any and all who might consider bringing guns into the District."

The maximum term for Arenas' crime is five years. The sentencing guidelines for someone with his record call for 6-24 months, although those guidelines also allow for probation.

A general survey of similar cases over the last two years in the city indicate that about half of the defendants convicted of Arenas' crime receive some jail time, but the mitigating circumstances vary widely. Arenas' prior conviction—a no contest plea to carrying a concealed weapon in California in 2003—was already a major strike against him, and the evidence revealed this week that he appeared to instigate a cover-up—as shown in a text message produced by prosecutors—has further damaged his case.

There's now little dispute about the basic facts of the case. Arenas and teammate Javaris Crittenton got into an argument over a card game and exchanged threats while the team was flying home from a road game on Dec. 19. Two days later, Arenas brought his guns to the locker room and put them in a chair by Crittenton's locker with a sign saying, "Pick 1." Crittenton then retrieved his own gun and showed it to Arenas.

Crittenton pleaded guilty in January to a misdemeanor gun charge and received a year of unsupervised probation. Arenas entered his guilty plea on Jan. 15.

Arenas' sentence could determine whether the Wizards will attempt to void the remainder of his six-year, $111 million contract, although the players' union has vowed to fight such a move. Regardless, Arenas' misdeed has helped contribute to the precipitous decline of a franchise that is headed for its second consecutive last-place finish after several years as playoff regular.

Gun control advocates will be monitoring Friday's developments closely. Paul Helmke, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, said he thinks jail time is appropriate in Arenas' case.

"Guns are not something to be played around with," Helmke said. "I think a message needs to be sent that Arenas violated the law, it's the second time he's violated a gun law, and while our laws are weak in this country, everyone says let's make sure we enforce the laws that are on the books. He violated those laws, and I think he needs to pay the penalty."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	46	25	.648	—
Toronto	35	35	.500	10 1/2
New York	26	45	.366	20
Philadelphia	25	47	.347	21 1/2
New Jersey	8	63	.113	38

Southeast Division

x-Orlando	50	22	.694	—
x-Atlanta	46	25	.648	3 1/2
Miami	38	34	.528	12
Charlotte	37	34	.521	12 1/2
Washington	21	49	.300	28

Central Division

y-Cleveland	57	15	.792	—
Milwaukee	39	31	.557	17
Chicago	33	38	.465	23 1/2
Indiana	26	46	.361	31
Detroit	23	48	.324	33 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	47	25	.653	—
San Antonio	42	28	.600	4
Memphis	38	34	.528	9
Houston	36	35	.507	10 1/2
New Orleans	34	39	.466	13 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	47	25	.653	—
Utah	47	25	.653	—
Oklahoma City	43	27	.614	3
Portland	43	29	.597	4
Minnesota	14	58	.194	33

Pacific Division

x-L.A. Lakers	53	18	.746	—
Phoenix	45	26	.634	8
L.A. Clippers	27	45	.375	26 1/2
Sacramento	24	48	.333	29 1/2
Golden State	20	51	.282	33

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

Yesterday's Games
Miami 103, Chicago 74
L.A. Clippers 99, Houston 93
Portland 101, Dallas 89

ARNOLD PALMER INVITATIONAL SCORES

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Scores Thursday at the Arnold Palmer Invitational, a $6 million PGA tournament played on the par-72, 7,353-yard Bay Hill Club & Lodge course:

FIRST ROUND

J.B. Holmes	33-33—66
Davis Love III	32-34—66
Henrik Stenson	33-34—67
Mike Weir	35-32—67
Ernie Els	33-35—68
Kevin Streelman	34-34—68
Kevin Na	36-32—68
Robert Allenby	36-32—68
Chris DiMarco	34-35—69
Heath Slocum	35-34—69
George McNeill	35-34—69
Jason Dufner	36-33—69
Steve Stricker	35-34—69
Ben Crane	33-36—69
D.J. Trahan	32-37—69
Nathan Green	35-34—69
Pat Perez	34-35—69
Steve Marino	35-35—70
Paul Goydos	33-37—70
Kevin Sutherland	34-36—70
Sean O'Hair	36-34—70
John Rollins	38-32—70
Boo Weekley	36-34—70
Chris Couch	35-35—70
Mark Wilson	33-37—70
Stuart Appleby	34-36—70
Edoardo Molinari	37-33—70
J.P. Hayes	37-33—70
Marc Leishman	35-35—70
Ben Curtis	35-35—70
Jonathan Byrd	35-36—71
Dustin Johnson	37-34—71
Zach Johnson	37-34—71
K.J. Choi	34-37—71
Jim Furyk	36-35—71
David Toms	37-34—71
Carl Pettersson	37-34—71
Jason Day	37-34—71
Graeme McDowell	33-38—71
Matt Jones	36-35—71
John Senden	36-35—71
Retief Goosen	35-36—71
Derek Lamely	36-35—71
Hunter Mahan	35-36—71
Phil Mickelson	36-35—71
Trevor Immelman	36-35—71
Jerry Kelly	36-35—71
Michael Allen	35-37—72
Brandt Snedeker	36-36—72
Ricky Barnes	35-37—72
Garrett Willis	37-35—72
Charles Howell III	38-34—72
Bo Van Pelt	35-37—72
John Mallinger	35-37—72
Chad Collins	37-35—72
Briny Baird	35-37—72
Bill Haas	36-36—72
Ryan Moore	37-35—72
Vaughn Taylor	35-37—72
Colin Montgomerie	36-36—72
Josh Teater	38-34—72
Erik Compton	37-35—72
Rocco Mediate	38-35—73
Skip Kendall	36-37—73
Stephen Ames	36-37—73
Kenny Perry	35-38—73
Ryuji Imada	37-36—73
Webb Simpson	36-37—73
Tim Herron	39-34—73
Anders Hansen	38-35—73
Stewart Cink	36-37—73
David Duval	37-36—73
D.A. Points	36-37—73
Rickie Fowler	40-33—73
Sam Saunders	35-38—73
Tim Clark	38-36—74
Bryce Molder	38-36—74
Kevin Stadler	39-35—74
Rod Pampling	35-39—74
Brian Gay	38-36—74
Martin Laird	35-39—74
Brett Quigley	35-39—74
Ryo Ishikawa	36-38—74
Kris Blanks	37-37—74
Charl Schwartzel	37-37—74
Tim Petrovic	35-39—74
Jason Gore	37-37—74
Nick Watney	36-38—74
Ryan Palmer	38-36—74
Daniel Chopra	35-39—74
Brian Davis	36-38—74
Alex Prugh	36-38—74
Matt Every	38-36—74
Fred Funk	38-37—75
Steve Elkington	37-38—75
Tom Gillis	37-38—75
Jamie Lovemark	39-36—75
Justin Rose	37-38—75
Rory Sabbatini	36-39—75
Scott Verplank	38-37—75
Danny Lee	37-38—75
Lee Janzen	38-38—76
Joe Ogilvie	37-39—76
Andrew Magee	39-37—76
Yuta Ikeda	38-38—76
Scott McCarron	37-39—76
Bubba Watson	39-37—76
Robert Gamez	41-35—76
Brendon de Jonge	41-35—76
Gregor Main	39-37—76
Camilo Villegas	37-40—77
Greg Owen	39-38—77
Steve Flesch	35-42—77
Billy Mayfair	38-39—77
Byeong-Hun An	41-36—77
Brian Stuard	40-37—77
Charlie Wi	38-40—78
Troy Matteson	41-38—79
Michael Campbell	41-39—80
Mike Keymont	47-37—84

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

NMIFA MEN'S LEAGUE STANDINGS

Team	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1 MP United FC	2	2	0	0	10	0	+10	6
Wild Bill's	2	2	0	0	7	1	6	6
K. Seniors	2	2	0	0	5	0	5	6
Inter Godfather's	2	1	0	1	2	2	0	3
Matansa FC	2	1	0	1	3	4	-1	3
Tan Holdings FC	2	1	0	1	3	5	-2	3
Young Guns	3	0	0	3	3	9	-6	0
K. Juniors	3	0	0	3	0	10	-10	0

Tagaman attracts 124 triathletes

Last Saturday's 21st Tagaman Triathlon was another outstanding success for the Northern Mariana Islands, bringing top-class triathletes and visitors for competition and fun.

The Tagaman's reputation and popularity were reflected in the diverse countries that fielded contestants—Japan, Korea, United Kingdom, Philippines, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, and U.S. mainland. The race attracted 124 competitors, overall.

Sam Gardner of the United Kingdom repeated the winning form he had in the March 13 Saipan XTERRA Championship, being the first to cross the tape in the Tagaman in 2:59:23. Mike Vine of Canada turned up the heat at the race end but was unable to catch Gardner, finishing just 47 seconds behind. Gardner had beaten Vine in the bike segment, while Vine had topped Gardner in the run segment.

Dan Bi Hong of Korea led the women's division and with a time of 3:20:47, followed by Sonny Vanlandingham of Colorado in 3:23:53.

In the relay results, both men's and women's divisions were swept by teams from the CNMI. The men's team of Kai Staal, Renato Calage, and Chang Whan Jang, ran away with the title in 3:20:56. The top women's team was Grace Kimball, Kimiko Hasegawa and Mamiko Berger, checking in at 3:46:35.

Of local entrants, Mieko Carey was the top placer, with a time of 3:27:21. Keiran Daly was the second NMI resident to finish, with a time of 3:39:49.

The event attracted 48 participants from the Northern Marianas, 42 participants from Korea, 20 participants from Japan, and six competitors from Europe, among all countries represented.

"This year's trio of signature sports events in March—the Saipan Marathon, XTERRA Saipan Championship, and Tagaman—underscore the opportunity for sports tourism in the Northern Marianas," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "With strategic promotions, we can continue to maximize that opportunity and attract more athletes to our islands."

The Kids Tagaman also had 26 participants for three divisions between ages 5 and 14. Top finishers were Lennosuke Suzuki (ages 5-7), Toda Kasai (ages 8-10 year), and Japanese triplets Tatsuya Morita, Yoshiya Morita, Mayu Morita, and their friend Hokuto Obara, who held hands to cross the finish line together (ages 11-14).

This was the third and final signature race held in the Northern Marianas during March, drawing international attention and athletes to this resort destination. The Tagaman Triathlon is the longest running race in the western Pacific. The event is named for Taga, a legendary chief of the ancient Chamoros with super strength. The event route included a 2-kilometer swim, 60-km bike, and 15-km run. ***(PR)***

COPSSA

From Page 28

chipped in 15, as he and Sablan anchored COPSSA All-Stars' comeback in the fourth quarter.

Tristan Ecalnea paced Southern with 23 points, but he was scoreless in the fourth canto when COPSSA All-Stars made a run.

The COPSSA All-Stars then played their second game against the MISO All-Stars with the former prevailing anew, 77-72.

Again, it was a come-from-behind victory for the COPSSA All-Stars, as they worked their way to a win despite falling behind by 15 at the end of the third period, 50-65.

The COPSSA All-Stars outgunned their counterparts in the fourth quarter, 27-7, to gain a 2-0 record in the boys' U17 division.

Luther Taylor, who missed the COPSSA All-Stars' debut game, played strong in Game 2 with his 26 points. Jeon was a consistent scorer for the COPSSA All-Stars, leading the team with his 28 markers, while Sablan chipped in 12.

The Settsu Red Impulse, a Japan-based basketball club, is entered in the same tournament and debuted against the Rays in the third game in the boys' U17 yesterday. Southern, which ruled last year's tournament after topping Marianas High School, 106-72, led the visitors by only a deuce, 19-17, after the first quarter of their game. Complete results of the match were unavailable at press time.

In the girls U15, Settsu was scheduled to duel the MISO Girls All-Stars in the last game in Day 1 of the tournament. Settsu cagebelles won last year's tournament, beating the MISO Girls All-Stars, 61-44.

The MISO Girls All-Stars opened their bid for another finals stint with a 64-42 rout of Kagman High School.

Roxanne Duenas led the MISO All-Stars, drilling 18 markers.

Games in the Settsu-Saipan caging continues today with only the Top 2 teams in each division after the round-robin tournament advancing to the finals.

BOYS

First Game

COPSSA 72 – S. Sablan 32, Jeon 15, Manalo 8, J. Sablan 6, Barry 5, T.Kautz 2.

SSHS 70 – Ecalnea 23, Cadiang 12, Palacios 11, Villanueva 6, Sablan 2, Alegre 2, Cervania 2, Meizer 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-19, 32-37, 48-56, 72-70.

Second Game

COPSSA 77 – Jeon 28, Taylor 26, S. Sablan 12, Manalo 4, Barry 2.

MISO All-Stars 72 – Talalemoto 18, Norita 14, Maratita 11, Darag 9, Caro 6, Lueng 5, Manalili 4, Hossain 4.

Scoring by quarters: 17-22, 31-41, 50-65, 77-72.

GIRLS

MISO All-Stars 64 –Duenas 18, Mendoza 16, Joseph 7, Rangamar 7, Abrams 6, Sapong 2, Williams 2.

KHS 42 – Hofscheiner 20, Mizutani 11, Jetley 9, Mettao 2.

Scoring by quarters: 14-6, 34-19, 50-31, 64-42.

TWO

From Page 28

Thoensaket made it a 2-0 lead in the second half when he found the back of the net two minutes after the second half started.

Inter Godfather's finally scored on Nakamura Koichiro goal in the 56th minute, but it was not enough to give Godfather's its second win in as many games.

K. Seniors 2, K. Juniors 0

The third and last match of the day was an all-Korean affair with the Korean Seniors blanking the Korean Juniors, 2-0.

Cho Jin Wook canned a pair of goals for K. Seniors, who also improved to a 2-0-0 mark tying MP United and Wild Bills for the No. 1 spot in the team standings based on the win-draw-loss slate.

Wook put K. Seniors in the scoreboard two minutes before the first half ended and then drilled his second one in the 71st minute.

Tan Holdings 3, Young Guns 2

In the curtain-raiser, Tan Holdings broke into the win column after edging Young Guns, 3-2.

Li Guang Ling scored the winning goal in the 78th minute, allowing Tan Holdings to bounce back from a 0-3 loss to K. Seniors in Week 2.

Tan Holdings' first two goals were courtesy of Jersh Angeles, who lit up the scoreboard with his first goal in the 15th minute.

Young Guns tied the game on an own goal in the 20th minute and even took the lead, 2-1, on Young Park's goal in the 35th minute.

Angeles was at it again in the second half, firing his second goal in the 68th minute to force another deadlock. Ten minutes later, Tan Holdings grabbed the upper hand on Ling's goal.

LEE

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time to enlist in Penn State's Reserve Officers Training Corps program.

With encouragement from his dad and mom, Lee finished his nursing degree in four years and in August 2008 was called up for active duty in the U.S. Army.

"Being a swimmer I endured a lot of hardship as well as learned a lot of discipline. It showed me how to persevere through grinding sessions in the pool and those experiences helped me through college and then in the Army," he said.

Lee said working as a critical care nurse in one of the biggest military hospitals in Europe allows him to get a glimpse of the sacrifices made by the fighting men of the United States.

He said he foresees himself deploying in one of the world's flashpoints—Afghanistan and Iraq—the next couple of years and he would centainly be ready to be at the beck and call of those needing medical care.

Asked if he plans to return home permanently in the not so distant future, Lee said being the first-born he is somewhat obligated to take over the family's auto shop business.

When he does settle back on Saipan, Lee also wants to coach swimming as a way of paying back the sport that made him what he is today.

PIC

From Page 28

"We have a lot of active bikers at PIC and they are expected to participate in this fundraising," said Bartolo, adding that proceeds from the race will go to cancer survivors.

The 50-km course will have riders leaving the PIC southern parking lot going to the Airport road and then Isa Drive to Talafofo all the way to Kingfisher Golf Links for the turnaround. From Kingfishers, riders will go down Capital Hill then head to Aqua Resort for the turn back to PIC through Beach Road.

Two weeks after the Race for a Cause, PIC will be holding a dodgeball tournament at the PIC hard court.

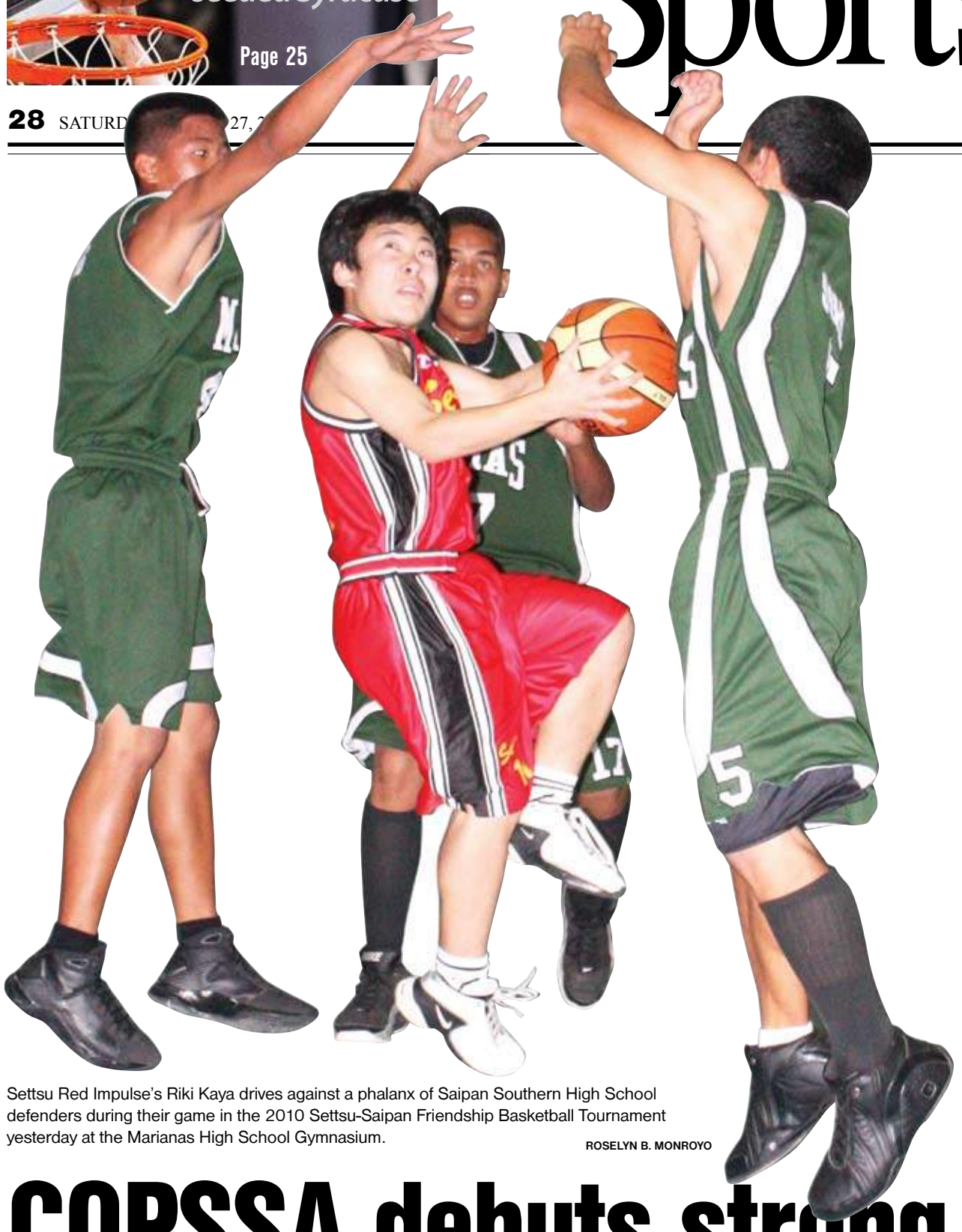
The dodgeball tournament will take place on April 23 and 24 and is open to only the first 16 teams to register by April 16. Entry fee is $100 and each team can have as much as 10 players with only six going on the court and four acting as substitutes. Each team must have at least two female members and one female should be on the court at all times.

"The dodgeball tournament has become a tradition for PIC. We pioneered this tournament and with the success of our past dodgeball tournaments, we feel that it will be best to continue having the event and inviting companies and clubs," PIC restaurant manager Henry Worswick said.

PIC Food and Beverage administrative assistant Paul Dujua said these two fundraising events are projects of PIC Food and Beverage department and they are encouraging members of the community to participate in this worthy cause.

"Joining our dodgeball tournament is one way of fostering camaraderie among employees or group members. In the past, we have several companies forming their own teams and enjoying the games. They came in costumes and exchanged loud cheers during games," Dujua said.

For more information about the two fundraisers, contact Bartolo at 234-7976 extension 5182 or Worswick at extension 5138.



Settsu Red Impulse's Riki Kaya drives against a phalanx of Saipan Southern High School defenders during their game in the 2010 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

COPSSA debuts strong in Settsu-Saipan caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Coalition of Private Schools on Saipan Association All-Stars swept their games in the opening day of the 2010 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The COPSSA All-Stars debuted with a 72-70 upset of MISO finalists Saipan Southern High School in the first game.

The selection of players from the private school league came back from a 10-point deficit in the third quarter, 48-58, to pull off the two-point win. Mt. Carmel's Sean Sablan scored six of the team's last seven points to power COPPSA All-Stars to their first win.

Sablan finished with a game-high 32 points, making 13 of them in the payoff canto. GCA's Dae Min Jeon

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Lee relishes Saipan vacation

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Bill Sakovich and his son Jonathan were not the only sports celebrities in town the past couple of weeks.

Seung Gin Lee, 2000 and 2001 NMASA Male Athlete of the Year, was also on Saipan and the 25-year-old enjoyed every second of his vacation back home.

Now a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, Lee works as a nurse in a military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany.

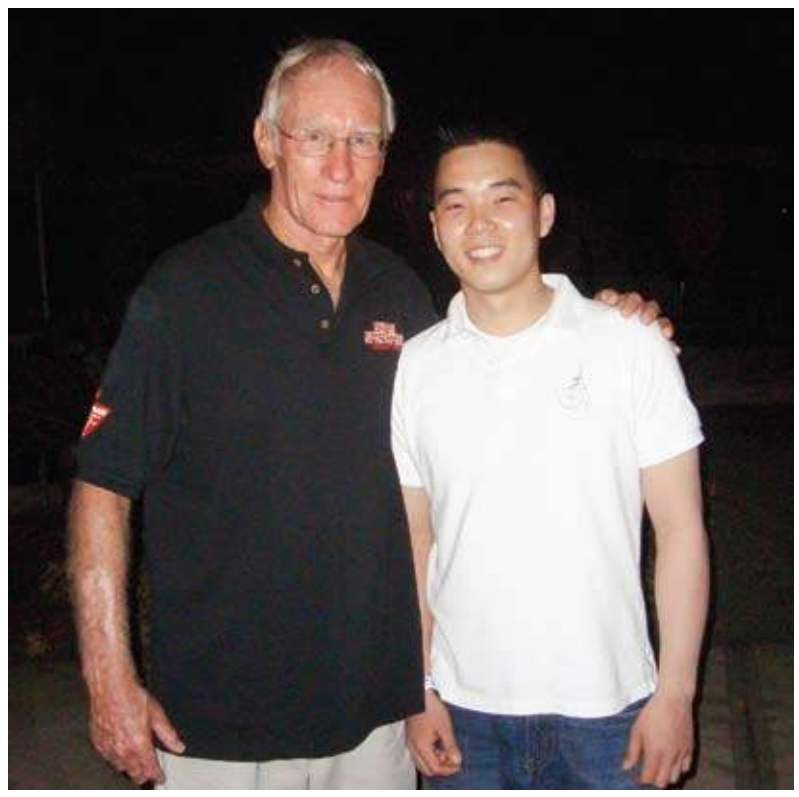
Aside from visiting family and friends, Lee also served as a volunteer in the 2010 Tagaman Triathlon as he helped guide bikers to the transition area for the run leg of last Saturday's race.

In an interview during the Tagaman awards ceremony that evening, Lee said his scheduled 10-day visit will be one of the longest he's been on Saipan since leaving for college at Penn State in 2003.

"Words can't express how I feel coming back home. I'm really blessed to have been born and raised on Saipan," he said.

According to Lee his training as a swimmer for Saipan Swim Club served him in good stead during his college years as not only did he excel in his nursing course but also found

See LEE on Page 27



MARK RABAGO

U.S. Army Lt. Seung Gin Lee, right, poses with Bill Sakovich during the awards ceremony of the 2010 Tagaman Triathlon last Saturday at Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

PIC to hold bike race, dodgeball tourney next month

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Wedding Party's Russ Quinn throws to Ardija during the 2009 PIC Fall Dodgeball Tournament late last year on the PIC tennis court. Next month, PIC will host another dodgeball tournament.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Pacific Islands Club will be holding two fundraising tournaments next month.

First up is the Race for a Cause, a 50-kilometer bike race open to all interested participants. The April 11 race, which will start and end at the PIC southern parking lot, will kick off at 6:15am. Registration begins at 5:30am and entrance fee is $20 to be paid by April 9.

The event has competitions in two divisions—mountain and road bikes. The top finisher in each division will receive $100 each. Second and third placers in each division will get special prizes from PIC.

PIC assistant restaurant manager Rommell Bartolo said they are expecting around 70 riders to participate in the weekend race with bulk of the riders coming from PIC.

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Two in a row for K. Seniors, Wild Bill's

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Wild Bill's and K. Senior's kept their records clean after prevailing over separate opponents in Week 3 of the 2010 NMIFA Men's Invitational Football League played last Sunday at the Oleai Sport Complex Field.

Wild Bills' played in the second game of the day and drew one goal each from Jason Schroeder and Jeeraphong Thoensaket to pull off a 2-1 triumph over Inter Godfather's and improve its record to 2-0-0 (win-draw-loss).

Schroeder broke into the scoreboard first with his goal in the 27th minute.

See TWO on Page 27

K. Seniors' Lee Jun Woo in action during their game against K. Juniors in the NMIFA men's league last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO